THE

CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

BY G. COLMAN AND D. GARRICK, ESQRS.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE AND COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

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REMARKS.

THIS play, independent of its own worth, claims respect from its joint authors. The one a scholar, a man of general and acknowledged talents, and—not among the least of his honours—the father of Colman the younger.

The other is a well-known name, as affixed to the greatest actor that ever appeared on the English stage, and the stage's best reformer.

Colman was a near relation to the Earl of Bath, and, on the death of that nobleman, came into possession of a considerable annuity. Previous to that event he studied at Lincoln's Inn, and was called to the bar; but no sooner did he find himself master of a fortune, and of his own leisure, than he quitted the employment of the law, for the more alluring pursuits of the drama.

Garrick was the son of a captain in the army, and becoming in his youth a pupil of Dr. Johnson, who taught the classics to a certain number of young gentlemen in the town of Litchfield, a mutual regard, in consequence of their intimacy, quickly subsisted between him and his tutor; and, weary of the hopeless prospect from a country life, they both took the

resolution to forsake their home.—On the very same day these two remarkable men came to London, on the very same errand—to seek their fortune.

It was to the honour of both Johnson and Garrick, that through life they were fond of each other's company. That Johnson could enjoy Garrick's lively sallies of whim and humour, shews, that his wisdom was neither gloomy nor austere;—and that Garrick should love Johnson's moral sentiments, and revere his religious scruples, proves, that the actor's hiliarity was neither mixed with vice nor with folly.

It is said of Garrick, that he never had any feeling either on or off the stage—yet he is allowed to have been a great actor and a good man. Art produced the first character; principle the second. He was strictly parsimonious in his own expences, yet was often generous to others. But, as a consciousness of duty rather than a sensation of tenderness, seemed to influence his charity (a motive which increased its merit,) he seldom was beloved even by those on whom he bestowed his best services.

His reputation, as a man, may perhaps be much easier supported than his credit as a pefformer. Morality is a fixed star; taste changes with the moon. While present taste is found to be inconstant and fallacious, who can rely on that which is past? Did the poet's works die with his body, like the actor's art, Shakspeare, from the erroneous judgment of many auditors, had been reported to succeeding

times as a secondary author, beneath Beaumont, Fletcher, and Ben Jonson.

Those *visible* marks, then, of dramatic talents, which Garrick has left behind him, can alone be judged with true precision.—As a writer, he has evinced much theatric skill. All he wrote, or altered of others' writings, were favourably received. Acute observation, and nice attention to the propensities of the public, governed his pen. The favour in which he was held by the town, made them attribute to his genius (and Colman never came forth to deny such conjecture) the most popular character in this play—Lord Ogleby. But it is rather to be suspected that Garrick did no more as a writer to the work, than cast a directing hand and eye over the whole; a task he was much better able to perform for the advantage of an author, than to produce any one efficient part.

Though the Clandestine Marriage may rank as a modern comedy, yet it is pleasanter to *read* than to *see*. The characters are well drawn; but the speeches are too long for the attention of a listener, though not for a reader. A London audience are become a very impatient multitude: and tragedy alone has the prerogative of being tedious.

Lord Ogleby, once the most admired part in this comedy is an evidence of the fluctuation of manners, modes, and opinions:—Forty years ago, it was reckoned so natural a representation of a man of fashion,

that several noblemen were said to have been in the author's thoughts when he designed the character: now, no part is so little understood in the play; and his foibles seem so discordant with the manly faults of the present time, that his good qualities cannot atone for them. Mr. Sterling, and his sister Heidelberg, who are neither of them governed by fashion, will survive a thousand Lord Oglebys.*

The play has not an atom of wit, but it has some humour.—The plot is an interesting one, and the events are natural and forcible; particularly the incident in the last scene, where almost all the persons of the drama are called from their beds, to bring about the catastrophe.

The union of interest between Colman and Garrick did not long continue after this play was produced. Mr. Colman soon purchased a share of the proprietorship of Covent-Garden Theatre; and now, he and Garrick having adverse views; something like hostility existed between them, till they each retired from their opposite theatres into private life.

* Some difference may have been caused in respect to the impression made by this character, from King, the admired Lord Ogleby, having first performed it in his manhood, and after, in his old age. When misfortune forces an actor on the stage beyond a certain time of life, he does not appear to more disadvantage in representing a young, than an old man —a cheerful audience love to see advanced age but in mimicry.

On this occurrence they once more became friends, —but their renewed friendship had no duration; for Garrick, soon after his retirement from the stage, quitted also the stage of life.—He died in 1779.

Colman lived near twenty years after him, but was for some time previous to his decease afflicted with a severe illness, which excluded him from all society.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	COVENT GARDEN.	DRURY LANE.
LORD OGLEBY	*Mr. Bernard.*	*Mr. Cherry.*
SIR JOHN MELVIL	*Mr. Farren.*	*Mr. Barrymore.*
STERLING	*Mr. Quick.*	*Mr. Dowton.*
LOVEWELL	*Mr. Holman.*	*Mr. Bartley.*
SERGEANT FLOWER	*Mr. Powell.*	*Mr. Packer.*
TRAVERSE	*Mr. Thompson.*	*Mr. Lee.*
TRUEMAN	*Mr. Evatt.*	*Mr. Cooke.*
CANTON	*Mr. Cubitt.*	*Mr. Wewitzer.*
BRUSH	*Mr. Fawcett.*	*Mr. Palmer.*
MRS. HEIDELBERG	*Mrs. Webb.*	*Miss Pope.*
MISS STERLING	*Mrs. Mattocks*	*Miss De Camp.*
FANNY	*Mrs. Esten.*	*Mrs. Mathews.*
BETTY	*Mrs. Martyr.*	*Miss Mellon.*
CHAMBERMAID	*Miss Stuart.*	*Mrs. Scott.*

THE

CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Room in STERLING'S *House.*

MISS FANNY *and* BETTY, *meeting.*

Betty. [*Running in.*] Ma'am! Miss Fanny! Ma'am!

Fanny. What's the matter, Betty?

Betty. Oh, la! ma'am! as sure as I am alive, here is your husband.

Fanny. Hush! my dear Betty! if any body in the house should hear you, I am ruined.

Betty. Mercy on me! it has frightened me to such a degree, that my heart is come up to my mouth.—But as I was saying, ma'am, here's that dear, sweet—

Fanny. Have a care, Betty!—

Betty. Lord! I am bewitch'd, I think,—but as I was a saying, Ma'am, here's Mr. Lovewell just come from London.

Fanny. Indeed!

Betty. Yes, indeed, and indeed, Ma'am, he is—I saw him crossing the court-yard.

Fanny. I am glad to hear it.——But pray now, my dear Betty, be cautious. Don't mention that word again, on any account. You know, we have agreed never to drop any expressions of that sort, for fear of an accident.

Betty. Dear ma'am, you may depend upon me. There is not a more trustier creature on the face of the earth than I am. Though I say it, I am as secret as the grave; and if it is never told till I tell it, it may remain untold till doom's-day for Betty.

Fanny. I know you are faithful; but in our circumstances we cannot be too careful.

Betty. Very true, ma'am! and yet I vow and protest, there's more plague than pleasure with a secret, especially if a body mayn't mention it to four or five of one's particular acquaintance.

Fanny. Do but keep this secret a little while longer, and then, I hope, you may mention it to any body. Mr. Lovewell will acquaint the family with the nature of our situation as soon as possible.

Betty. The sooner the better, I believe: for if he does not tell it, there's a little tell-tale, I know of, will come and tell it for him.

Fanny. Fie, Betty. [*Blushing.*

Betty. Ah! you may well blush. But you're not so sick, and so pale, and so wan, and so many qualms—

Fanny. Have done! I shall be quite angry with you.

Betty. Angry—Bless the dear puppet! I am sure I shall love it as much as if it was my own—I meant no harm, heaven knows.

Fanny. Well, say no more of this—It makes me uneasy. All I have to ask of you is, to be faithful and secret, and not to reveal this matter, till we disclose it to the family ourselves.

Betty. Me reveal it!—If I say a word, I wish I may be burned. I would not do you any harm for the world—and as for Mr. Lovewell, I am sure I have loved the dear gentleman ever since he got a tide-waiter's place for my brother. But let me tell you both, you must leave off your soft looks to each other, and your whispers, and your glances, and your always sitting next to one another at dinner, and your long walks together in the evening. For my part, if I had not been in the secret, I should have known you were a pair of lovers at least, if not man and wife, as——

Fanny. See there now! again. Pray be careful.

Betty. Well, well—nobody hears me. Man and wife.—I'll say no more—what I tell you is very true for all that——

Lovewell. [*Calling within.*] William!

Betty. Hark! I hear your husband——

Fanny. What!

Betty. I say, here comes Mr. Lovewell.—Mind the caution I give you—I'll be whipped now if you are not the first person he sees or speaks to in the family. However, if you choose it, it's nothing at all to me—as you sow, so you must reap—as you brew, so you must bake. I'll e'en slip down the back-stairs and leave you together. [*Exit.*

Fanny. I see, I see I shall never have a moment's ease till our marriage is made public. New distresses crowd in upon me every day. The solicitude of my mind sinks my spirits, preys upon my health, and destroys every comfort of my life. It shall be revealed, let what will be the consequence.

Enter LOVEWELL.

Lov. My love! How's this? In tears?—Indeed this is too much. For my sake, for your own, be

comforted! Why will you study to add to our uneasiness and perplexity?

Fanny. Oh, Mr. Lovewell, tne indelicacy of a secret marriage grows every day more and more shocking to me. I walk about the house like a guilty wretch: I imagine myself the object of the suspicion of the whole family; and am under the perpetual terrors of a shameful detection.

Lov. Indeed, indeed, you are to blame. To clear up this affair properly to Mr. Sterling, is the continual employment of my thoughts. Every thing now is in a fair train. It begins to grow ripe for a discovery; and I have no doubt of its concluding to the satisfaction of ourselves, of your father, and the whole family.

Fanny. End how it will, I am resolv'd it shall end soon—very soon. I would not live another week in this agony of mind to be mistress of the universe.

Lov. Do not be too violent neither. Do not let us disturb the joy of your sister's marriage with the tumult this matter may occasion!—I have brought letters from Lord Ogleby and Sir John Melvil to Mr. Sterling. They will be here this evening—and, I dare say, within this hour.

Fanny. I am sorry for it.

Lov. Why so?

Fanny. No matter—Only let us disclose our marriage immediately!

Lov. As soon as possible.

Fanny. But directly.

Lov. In a few days, you may depend on it.

Fanny. To-night—or to-morrow morning.

Lov. That, I fear, will be impracticable.

Fanny. Nay, but you must.

Lov. Must! Why?

Fanny. Indeed you must.—I have the most alarming reasons for it.

Lov. Alarming, indeed? for they alarm me, even before I am acquainted with them: what are they?

Fanny. I cannot tell you.

Lov. Not tell me?

Fanny. Not at present. When all is settled, you shall be acquainted with every thing.

Lov. What can this mean! Is it possible you can have any reasons that need be concealed from me?

Fanny. Do not disturb yourself with conjectures; but rest assur'd, that though you are unable to divine the cause, the consequence of a discovery, be it what it will, cannot be attended with half the miseries of the present interval.

Lov. You put me upon the rack—I would do any thing to make you easy.——But you know your father's temper.—Money (you will excuse my frankness) is the spring of all his actions, which nothing but the idea of acquiring nobility or magnificence can ever make him forego—and these he thinks his money will purchase.——You know too your aunt's, Mrs. Heidelberg's notions of the splendour of high life; her contempt for every thing that does not relish of what she calls quality; and that, from the vast fortune in her hands by her late husband, she absolutely governs Mr. Sterling and the whole family. Now, if they should come to the knowledge of this affair too abruptly they might perhaps be incensed beyond all hopes of reconciliation.

Fanny. But if they are made acquainted with it otherwise than by ourselves, it will be ten times worse.—Discover it therefore, immediately, lest some accident should bring it to light, and involve us in additional disgrace.

Lov. Well, well, I mean to discover it soon, but would not do it too precipitately.—But, my principal hopes are these—my relationship to Lord Ogleby, and his having placed me with your father, have been, you know, the first links in the chain of this connection between the two families: in consequence of which, I am at present in high favour with all parties.

—Let me beg, you, therefore, to have but a little patience, as, you see, we are upon the very eve of a discovery, that must probably be to our advantage.

Fanny. Manage it your own way. I am persuaded.

Lov. But in the mean time make yourself easy.

Fanny. As easy as I can, I will. We had better not remain together any longer at present. Think of this business, and let me know how you proceed.

Lov. Depend on my care! But, pray, be cheerful.

Fanny. I will.

Enter STERLING, *as she is going out.*

Sterl. Hey day! who have we got here?

Fanny. [*Confused.*] Mr. Lovewell, sir!

Sterl. And where are you going, hussy?

Fanny. To my sister's chamber, sir. [*Exit.*

Sterl. Ah, Lovewell! What! always getting my foolish girl yonder into a corner?—Well, well—let us but once see her eldest sister fast married to Sir John Melvil, we'll soon provide a good husband for Fanny, I warrant you.

Lov. Would to heaven, sir, you would provide her one of my recommendation!

Sterl. Yourself! eh, Lovewell?

Lov. With your pleasure, sir.

Sterl. Mighty well!

Lov. And I flatter myself, that such a proposal would not be very disagreeable to Miss Fanny.

Sterl. Better and better!

Lov. And if I could but obtain your consent, sir——

Sterl. What! you marry Fanny?—no, no—that will never do, Lovewell!——You're a good boy, to be sure—I have a great value for you——but can't think of you for a son-in-law.——There's no stuff in the case; no money, Lovewell!

Lov. My pretensions to fortune, indeed, are but moderate; but though not equal to splendour, sufficient to keep us above distress.—Add to which, that I hope by diligence to increase it—and have love, honour——.

Sterl. But not the stuff, Lovewell!—Add one little round O to the sum total of your fortune, and that will be the finest thing you can say to me.—You know I've a regard for you—would do any thing to serve you—any thing, on the footing of friendship——but——

Lov. If you think me worthy of your friendship, sir, be assured that there is no instance in which I should rate your friendship so highly.

Sterl. Psha! psha! that's another thing you know. Where money or interest is concerned, friendship is quite out of the question.

Lov. But where the happiness of a daughter is at stake, you would not scruple, sure, to sacrifice a little to her inclinations.

Sterl. Inclinations! Why, you would not persuade me that the girl is in love with you—eh, Lovewell?

Lov. I cannot absolutely answer for Miss Fanny, sir; but am sure that the chief happiness or misery of my life depends entirely upon her.

Sterl. Why, indeed now, if your kinsman, Lord Ogleby, would come down handsomely for you—but that's impossible—No, no—'twill never do—I must hear no more of this—Come, Lovewell, promise me that I shall hear no more of this.

Lov. [*Hesitating.*] I am afraid, sir, I should not be able to keep my word with you, if I did promise you.

Sterl. Why, you would not offer to marry her without my consent! would you, Lovewell?

Lov. Marry her, sir! [*Confused.*

Sterl. Ay, marry her, sir!—I know very well that a warm speech or two from such a dangerous young

spark as you are would go much farther towards persuading a silly girl to do what she has more than a month's mind to do, than twenty grave lectures from fathers or mothers, or uncles or aunts, to prevent her. But you would not, sure, be such a base fellow, such a treacherous young rogue, as to seduce my daughter's affections, and destroy the peace of my family in that manner.—I must insist on it, that you give me your word not to marry her without my consent.

Lov. Sir—I—I—as to that—I—I—beg, sir,—— Pray, sir, excuse me on this subject at present.

Sterl. Promise then, that you will carry this matter no farther without my approbation.

Lov. You may depend on it, sir, that it shall go no farther.

Sterl. Well, well—that's enough—I'll take care of the rest, I warrant you.—Come, come, let's have done with this nonsense!—What's doing in town?—Any news upon 'Change?

Lov. Nothing material.

Sterl. And how are stocks?

Lov. Fell one and a half this morning.

Sterl. Well, well—they'll soon be up again.—But how are Lord Ogleby and Sir John Melvil? When are we to expect them?

Lov. Very soon, sir; I came on purpose to bring you their commands. Here are letters from both of them? [*Giving letters.*

Sterl. Let me see, let me see—'Slife, how his lordship's letter is perfumed!—It takes my breath away. [*Opening it.*] And French paper too!—with a slippery gloss on it that dazzles one's eyes.——*My dear Mr. Sterling*——[*Reading.*] Mercy on me! his lordship writes a worse hand than a boy at his exercise.—But how's this?—Eh!——*With you to-night*—— [*Reading.*] *Lawyers to-morrow morning.*——To-night—that's sudden, indeed——Where's my sister Hei-

delberg? She should know of this immediately.—Here, John! Harry! Thomas! [*Calling the* SERVANTS.] Harkye, Lovewell!

Lov. Sir.

Sterl. Mind now, how I'll entertain his lordship and Sir John—We'll shew your fellows at the other end of the town how we live in the city—They shall eat gold—and drink gold—and lie in gold.——Here, cook, butler! [*Calling.*] What signifies your birth, and education, and titles!—Money, money!—that's the stuff that makes the great man in this country.

Lov. Very true, sir.

Sterl. True, sir!—Why then have done with your nonsense of love and matrimony. You're not rich enough to think of a wife yet. A man of business should mind nothing but his business.——Where are these fellows?—John! Thomas! [*Calling.*]—Get an estate, and a wife will follow of course.——Ah, Lovewell! an English merchant is the most respectable character in the universe.—'Slife, man, a rich English merchant may make himself a match for the daughter of a nabob.——Where are all my rascals?—Here, William!—— [*Exit, calling.*

Lov. So—as I suspected.——Quite averse to the match, and likely to receive the news of it with great displeasure.——What's best to be done?——Let me see—Suppose I get Sir John Melvil to interest himself in this affair. He may mention it to Lord Ogleby with a better grace than I can, and more probably prevail on him to interfere in it.——Poor Fanny! it hurts me to see her so uneasy.—Something must be done upon her account; for, at all events, her solicitude shall be removed. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment.

Miss Sterling *and* Miss Fanny *discovered.*

Miss Sterl. O, my dear sister, say no more!—This is downright hypocrisy. You shall never convince me that you don't envy me beyond measure.—Well, after all, it is extremely natural—it is impossible to be angry with you.

Fanny. Indeed, sister, you have no cause.

Miss Sterl. And you really pretend not to envy me?

Fanny. Not in the least.

Miss Sterl. And you don't in the least wish that you was just in my situation?

Fanny. No, indeed, I don't. Why should I?

Miss Sterl. Why should you? What! on the brink of marriage, fortune, title—But I had forgot—There's that dear sweet creature Mr. Lovewell in the case.—You would not break your faith with your true love now for the world, I warrant you.

Fanny. Mr. Lovewell!—always Mr. Lovewell!—Lord, what signifies Mr. Lovewell, sister?

Miss Sterl. Pretty peevish soul!—O, my dear grave, romantic sister! a perfect philosopher in petticoats! Love and a cottage! eh, Fanny?—Ah, give me indifference and a coach and six!

Fanny. And why not a coach and six without the indifference?—But, pray, when is this happy marriage of yours to be celebrated? I long to give you joy.

Miss Sterl. In a day or two—I cannot tell exactly

Oh! my dear sister!—I must mortify her a little: [*Aside.*] I know you have a pretty taste. Pray, give me your opinion of my jewels.—How do you like the style of this esclavage? [*Shewing jewels.*

Fanny. Extremely handsome indeed, and well fancied.

Miss Sterl. What d'ye think of these bracelets? I shall have a miniature of my father set round with diamonds to one, and Sir John's to the other.—And this pair of ear-rings!—set transparent!—Here, the tops, you see, will take off, to wear in a morning, or in an undress—how d'ye like them? [*Shews jewels.*

Fanny. Very much, I assure you. Bless me, sister, you have a prodigious quantity of jewels: you'll be the very queen of diamonds.

Miss Sterl. Ha, ha, ha! very well, my dear!—I shall be as fine as a little queen, indeed. I have a boquet to come home to-morrow—made up of diamonds, and rubies, and emeralds, and topazes, and amethysts—jewels of all colours, green, red, blue, yellow, intermixed—the prettiest thing you ever saw in your life! The jeweller says, I shall set out with as many diamonds as any body in town, except Lady Brilliant, and Polly What-d'ye-call it, Lord Squander's kept mistress.

Fanny. But what are your wedding clothes, sister?

Miss Sterl. O, white and silver, to be sure, you know. I bought them at Sir Joseph Lutestring's, and sat above an hour in the parlour behind the shop, consulting Lady Lutestring about gold and silver stuffs, on purpose to mortify her.

Fanny. Fie, sister! how could you be so abominably provoking?

Miss Sterl. Oh, I have no patience with the pride of your city-knight's ladies.—Did you ever observe the airs of Lady Lutestring, dressed in the richest brocade out of her husband's shop, playing crown whist at Haberdasher's Hall—Whilst the civil smirking Sir

Joseph, with a snug wig trimmed round his broad face, as close as a new-cut yew-hedge, and his shoes so black that they shine again, stands all day in his shop, fastened to his counter, like a bad shilling?

Fanny. Indeed, indeed, sister, this is too much—If you talk at this rate, you will be absolutely a bye-word in the city—You must never venture on the inside of Temple Bar again.

Miss Sterl. Never do I desire it—never, my dear Fanny, I promise you. Oh, how I long to be transported to the dear regions of Grosvenor Square—far, far from the dull districts of Aldersgate, Cheap, Candlewick, and Farringdon Without and Within!—My heart goes pit-a-pat at the very idea of being introduced at Court!—gilt chariot!—pyeballed horses!—laced liveries!—and then the whispers buzzing round the circle—The men standing on tiptoe—"Who is she? Who is that young lady?"—"Lady Melvil, ma'am!"——Lady Melvil! My ears tingle at the sound.—And then at dinner, instead of my father perpetually asking—"Any news upon 'Change?"—to cry "Well, Sir John! any thing new from Arthur's?"—or to say to some other woman of quality, "Was your ladyship at the Duchess of Rubber's last night?—Did you call in at Lady Thunder's? In the immensity of crowd, I swear I did not see you—Scarce a soul at the Opera last Saturday—Shall I see you at Carlisle House next Thursday?"—Oh, the dear Beau Monde! I was born to move in the sphere of the great world.

Fanny. And so, in the midst of all this happiness, you have no compassion for me—no pity for us poor mortals in common life.

Miss Sterl. [*Affectedly.*] You?—You're above pity.—You would not change conditions with me.—You're over head and ears in love, you know.—Nay, for that matter, if Mr. Lovewell and you come together, as I doubt not you will, you will live very com-

fortably, I dare say.—He will mind his business—you'll employ yourself in the delightful care of your family—and once in a season perhaps you'll sit together in a front box at a benefit play, as we used to do at our dancing master's, you know—and perhaps I may meet you in the summer with some other citizens at Tunbridge. For my part, I shall always entertain a proper regard for my relations.—You sha'n't want my countenance, I assure you.

Fanny. Oh, you're too kind, sister!

Enter MRS. HEIDELBERG.

Mrs. Heidel. [*At entering.*] Here's this evening!—I vow and pertest we shall scarce have time to provide for them—Oh, my dear! [*To* MISS STERLING.] I am glad to see you're not quite in a dish-abile. Lord Ogleby and Sir John Melvil will be here to-night.

Miss Sterl. To-night, ma'am?

Mrs. Heidel. Yes, my dear, to-night.—Oh, put on a smarter cap, and change those ordinary ruffles!—Lord, I have such a deal to do, I shall scarce have time to slip on my Italian lutestring.—Where is this dawdle of a housekeeper?

Enter MRS. TRUSTY.

Oh, here, Trusty! do you know that people of qualaty are expected here this evening?

Trusty. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. Heidel. Well—Do you be sure now that every thing is done in the most genteelest manner, and to the honour of the family.

Trusty. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. Heidel. Well—but mind what I say to you.

Trusty. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. Heidel. His lordship is to lie in the chintz bed-chamber, d'ye hear?—and Sir John in the blue damask room—his lordship's valet-de-shamb in the opposite——

Trusty. But Mr Lovewell is come down—and you know that's his room, ma'am.

Mrs. Heidel. Well, well—Mr. Lovewell may make shift—or get a bed at the George.——But harkye, Trusty!

Trusty. Ma'am.

Mrs. Heidel. Get the great dining room in order as soon as possible. Unpaper the curtains, take the kivers off the couch and the chairs; and, do you hear, take the china dolls out of my closet, and put them on the mantle piece immediately, and mind, as soon as his lordship comes in, be sure you set all their heads a nodding.

Trusty. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. Heidel. Be gone then! fly this instant—— Where's my brother Sterling?

Trusty. Talking to the butler, ma'am.

Mrs. Heidel. Very well. [*Exit* TRUSTY.] Miss Fanny! I pertest I did not see you before—Lord, child, what's the matter with you?

Fanny. With me! Nothing, ma'am.

Mrs. Heidel. Bless me! Why your face is as pale, and black, and yellow—of fifty colours, I vow and pertest.——And then you have drest yourself as loose and as big——I declare there is not such a thing to be seen now as a young woman with a fine waist—— You all make yourselves as round as Mrs. Deputy Barter. Go, child!——You know the qualaty will be here by and by.—Go, and make yourself a little more fit to be seen. [*Exit* FANNY.] She is gone away in tears—absolutely crying, I vow and pertest. ——This ridiculous love! we must put a stop to it. It makes a perfect natural of the girl.

Miss Stirl. Poor soul! she can't help it. [*Affectedly.*

Mrs. Heidel. Well, my dear! Now I shall have an opportoonity of convincing you of the absurdity of what you was telling me concerning Sir John Melvill's behaviour to you.

Miss Sterl. Oh, it gives me no manner of uneasiness. But, indeed, ma'am, I cannot be persuaded but that Sir John is an extremely cold lover. Such distant civility, grave looks, and lukewarm professions of esteem for me and the whole family! I have heard of flames and darts, but Sir John's is a passion of mere ice and snow.

Mrs. Heidel. Oh fie, my dear! I am perfectly ashamed of you. That's so like the notions of your poor sister! What you complain of as coldness and indiffarence is nothing but the extreme gentilaty of his address, an exact pictur of the manners of qualaty.

Miss Sterl. O, he is the very mirror of complaisance! full of formal bows and set speeches!—I declare, if there was any violent passion on my side, I should be quite jealous of him.

Mrs. Heidel. Jealous!—I say, jealous, indeed—Jealous of who, pray?

Miss Sterl. My sister Fanny. She seems a much greater favourite than I am, and he pays her infinitely more attention, I assure you.

Mrs. Heidel. Lord! d'ye think a man of fashion, as he is, cannot distinguish between the genteel and the vulgar part of the family?—Between you and your sister, for instance—or me and my brother?——Be advised by me, child! It is all politeness and good-breeding. Nobody knows the qualaty better than I do.

Miss Sterl. In my mind the old lord, his uncle, has ten times more gallantry about him than Sir John. He is full of attention to the ladies, and smiles, and grins, and leers, and ogles, and fills every wrinkle of his old wizen face with comical expressions of tenderness. I think he would make an admirable sweetheart.

Enter STERLING.

Sterl. [*At entering.*] No fish?—Why the pond was

dragged but yesterday morning——There's carp and tench in the boat——Pox on't, if that dog Lovewell had any thought, he wou'd have brought down a turbot, or some of the land-carriage mackarel.

Mrs. Heidel. Lord, brother, I am afraid his lordship and Sir John will not arrive while it is light.

Sterl. I warrant you.——But pray, sister Heidelberg, let the turtle be dressed to-morrow, and some venison—and let the gardener cut some pine-apples —and get out some ice.——I'll answer for wine, I warrant you——I'll give them such a glass of champagne as they never drank in their lives—no, not at a duke's table.

Mrs. Heidel. Pray, now, brother, mind how you behave. I am always in a fright about you with people of qualaty. Take care that you don't fall asleep directly after supper, as you commonly do. Take a good deal of snuff, and that will keep you awake—And don't burst out with your horrible loud horse-laughs. It is monstrous wulgar.

Sterl. Never fear, sister!——Who have we here?

Mrs. Heidel. It is Mons. Cantoon, the Swish gentleman that lives with his lordship, I vow and pertest

Enter CANTON.

Sterl. Ah, mounseer! you servant.——I am very glad to see you, mounseer.

Can. Mosh oblige to Mons. Sterling.—Ma'am, I am your——Matemoiselle, I am your. [*Bowing round.*

Mrs. Heidel. Your humble servant, Mr. Cantoon!

Can. Kiss your hand, matam!

Sterl. Well, mounseer!—and what news of your good family?——when are we to see his lordship and Sir John?

Can. Mons. Sterling! Milor Ogleby and Sir Jean Melvil, will be hear in one quarter-hour

Sterl. I am glad to hear it.

Mrs. Heidel. O, I am perdigious glad to hear it. Being so late, I was afeard of some accident.—Will you please to have any thing, Mr. Cantoon, after your journey?

Can. No, tank you, ma'am.

Mrs Heidel. Shall I go and show you the apartments, sir?

Can. You do me great honeur, ma'am.

Mrs. Heidel. Come then!—come, my dear.

[*To* MISS STERLING.—*Exeunt.*

Sterl. Pox on't, it's almost dark—It will be too late to go round the garden this evening. However, I will carry them to take a peep at my fine canal at least, I am determined. [*Exit*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

An Anti-Chamber to LORD OGLEBY'S *Bed-Chamber. Table with Chocolate, and small Case for Medicines.*

BRUSH, *my* LORD'S *Valet-de-Chambre, and* STERLING'S CHAMBERMAID, *discovered.*

Brush. You shall stay, my dear, I insist upon it.

Cham. Nay, pray, sir, don't be so positive; I can't stay indeed.

Brush. You shall drink one cup to our better acquaintance.

Cham. I seldom drinks chocolate; and, if I did, one has no satisfaction with such apprehensions about one. If my lord should wake, or the Swish gentleman should see one, or madam Heidelberg should know of it, I should be frighted to death;

besides, I have had my tea already this morning—I'm sure I hear my lord. [*In a fright.*

Brush. No, no, madam, don't flutter yourself—the moment my lord wakes he rings his bell, which I answer, sooner or later, as it suits my convenience.

Cham. But should he come upon us without ringing——

Brush. I'll forgive him if he does—This key [*Takes a phial out of the case.*] locks him up till I please to let him out.

Cham. Law! sir, that's pothecary's stuff.

Brush. It is so—but without this he can no more get out of bed than he can read without spectacles—[*Sips.*] What with qualms, age, rheumatism, and a few surfeits in his youth, he must have a great deal of brushing, oiling, screwing, and winding-up, to set him a going for the day.

Cham. [*Sips.*] That's prodigious indeed—[*Sips.*] My lord seems quite in a decay.

Brush. Yes, he's quite a spectacle, [*Sips.*] a mere corpse, till he is reviv'd and refresh'd from our little magazine here. When the restorative pills, and cordial waters warm his stomach, and get into his head, vanity frisks in his heart, and then he sets up for the lover, the rake, and the fine gentleman.

Cham. [*Sips.*] Poor gentleman! but should the Swish gentleman come upon us? [*Frightened.*

Brush. Why then the English gentleman would be very angry.—No foreigner must break in upon my privacy. [*Sips.*] But I can assure you Monsieur Canton is otherwise employ'd—He is obliged to skim the cream of half a score newspapers for my lord's breakfast—ha, ha, ha! Pray, madam, drink your cup peaceably.—My lord's chocolate is remarkably good; he won't touch a drop but what comes from Italy.

Cham. [*Sipping.*] 'Tis very fine indeed! [*Sips.*] and charmingly perfum'd: it smells for all the world like our ladies' dressing-boxes.

Brush. [*Sips.*] You have an excellent taste, madam; and I must beg of you to accept of a few cakes for your own drinking, [*Takes them out of a drawer in the table.*] and, in return, I desire nothing but to taste the perfume of your lips [*Kisses her.*]—A small return of favours, madam, will make, I hope, this country and retirement agreeable to us both [*He bows, she curtsies.*]—Your young ladies are fine girls, faith; [*Sips.*] though, upon my soul, I am quite of my lord's mind about them; and were I inclined to matrimony, I should take the youngest.

[*Sips.*

Cham. Miss Fanny! The most affablest, and the most best natur'd creter!——

Brush. And the eldest a little haughty or so——

Cham. More haughtier and prouder than Saturn himself—but this I say quite confidential to you; for one would not hurt a young lady's marriage, you know. [*Sips.*

Brush. By no means; but you cannot hurt it with us—we don't consider tempers, we want money, Mrs. Nancy. Give us plenty of that, we'll abate you a great deal in other particulars—ha, ha, ha!

Cham. Bless me here's somebody! [*Bell rings.*]—Oh, 'tis my lord!—Well, your servant, Mr. Brush; I'll clean the cups in the next room.

Brush. Do so—but never mind the bell—I sha'n't go this half hour.—Will you drink tea with me in the afternoon?

Cham. Not for the world, Mr. Brush. I'll be here to set all things to rights—But I must not drink tea indeed—and so your servant.

[*Exit with tea-board.—Bell rings again.*

Brush. It is impossible to stupify one's self in the country for a week, without some little flirting with the Abigails;—this is much the handsomest wench in the house, except the old citizen's youngest daughter, and I have not time enough to lay a plan

for her. [*Bell rings.*] And now I'll go to my lord, for I have nothing else to do. [*Going.*

Enter CANTON, *with Newspapers in his Hand.*

Can. Monsieur Brush!——Maistre Brush!——my lor stirra yet?

Brush. He has just rung his bell—I am going to him. [*Exit.*

Can. Depechez vous donc. [*Puts on his spectacles.*] —I wish de deveil had all dese papiers—I forget as fast as I read—de Advertise put out of my head de Gazette, de Cronique, and so dey all go l'un aprés l'autre—I must get some nouvelle for my lor, or he'll be enragé, contre moi——Voyans! [*Reads the paper.*] Here is nothing but Anti-sejanus and advertise—

Enter MAID *with Chocolate Things.*

Vat you want, chil!——

Maid. Only the chocolate things, sir.

Can. O, ver well—dat is good girl—and very prit too. [*Exit* MAID.

Lord Og. [*Within.*] Canton! he! he!—[*Coughs.*] Canton!—

Can. I come, my lor!——vat shall I do?—I have no news—he will make great tintamarre!—

Lord Og. [*Within.*] Canton! I say, Canton! Where are you?

Enter LORD OGLEBY, *leaning on* BRUSH.

Can. Here, my lor!—I ask pardon, my lor I have not finish de papiers.

Lord Og. Damn your pardon, and your papiers—I want you here, Canton.

Can. Den I run, dat is all.

[*Shuffles along.* LORD OGLEBY *leans upon* CANTON *too, and comes forward.*

Lord Og. You Swiss are the most unaccountable mixture—you have the language and the impertinence of the French, with the laziness of Dutchmen.

Can. 'Tis very true, my lor—I can't help——

Lord Og. [*Cries out.*] O Diavolo!

Can. You are not in pain, I hope, my lor.

Lord Og. Indeed but I am, my lor.—That vulgar fellow, Sterling, with his city politeness, would force me down his slope last night to see a clay-coloured ditch, which he calls a canal; and what with the dew, and the east wind, my hips and shoulders are absolutely screw'd to my body.

Can. A littel veritable eau d'arquibusade vil set all to right——

[LORD OGLEBY *sits down, and* BRUSH *gives chocolate.*

Lord Og. Where are the palsy drops, Brush?

Brush. Here, my lord! [*Pouring out.*

Lord Og. Quelle nouvelle avez vous, Canton?

Can. A great deal of papier, but no news at all

Lord Og. What! nothing at all, you stupid fellow?

Can. Oui, my lor, I have littel advertise here vil give you more plaisir den all de lies about nothing at all. La Voila! [*Puts on his spectacles*

Lord Og. Come, read it, Canton, with good emphasis, and good discretion.

Can. I vil, my lor. [CANTON reads.] *Dere is no question, but that the Cosmetique Royale vil utterly take away all heats, pimps, frecks oder eruptions of de skin, and likewise de wrinque of old age, &c. &c.*—A great deal more, my lor.—*Be sure to ask for de Cosmetique Royale, signed by the Docteur own hand*—*Dere is more raison for dis caution dan good men vil tink.*—Eh bien, my lor.

Lord Og. Eh bien, Canton!—Will you purchase any?

Can. For you, my lor?

Lord Og. For me, you old puppy! for what?

Can. My lor!

Lord Og. Do I want cosmetics?

Can. My lor.

Lord Og. Look in my face—come, be sincere—— Does it want the assistance of art?

Can. [*With his spectacles.*] En verité non——'Tis very smoose and brillian——but tote dat you might take a little by way of prevention.

Lord Og. You thought like an old fool, monsieur, as you generally do.——The surfeit water, Brush! [BRUSH *pours out.*]—What do you think, Brush, of this family we are going to be connected with?—— Eh!

Brush. Very well to marry in, my lord; but it would never do to live with.

Lord Og. You are right, Brush——There is no washing the blackmoor white——Mr. Sterling will never get rid of Blackfriars——always taste of the Borachio——and the poor woman, his sister, is so busy, and so notable, to make one welcome, that I have not yet got over the fatigue of her first reception; it almost amounted to suffocation:——I think the daughters are tolerable——Where's my cephalic snuff? [BRUSH *gives him a box.*

Can. Dey tink so of you, my lor, for dey look at no ting else, ma foi.

Lord Og. Did they? Why, I think they did a little ——Where's my glass?—[BRUSH *puts one on the table.*] The youngest is delectable. [*Takes snuff.*

Can. O oui, my lor, very delect, inteed; she made doux yeux at you, my lor.

Lord Og. She was particular.——The eldest, my nephew's lady, will be a most valuable wife; she has all the vulgar spirits of her father and aunt, happily blended with the termagant qualities of her deceased mother.——Some peppermint water, Brush—— How happy is it, Canton, for young ladies in

general, that people of quality overlook every thing in a marriage-contract but their fortune.

Can. C'est bien heureux, et commode aussi.

Lord Og. Brush, give me that pamphlet by my bed-side.——[BRUSH *goes for it.*] Canton, do you wait in the anti-chamber, and let nobody interrupt me till I call you.

Can. Mush good may do your lordship. [*Exit.*

Lord Og. [*To* BRUSH, *who brings the pamphlet.*] And now, Brush, leave me a little to my studies. [*Exit.* BRUSH.]—What can I possibly do among these women here with this confounded rheumatism? It is a most grievous enemy to gallantry and address. [*Gets off his chair.*] He! courage my lor! by heavens I'm another creature. [*Hums and dances a little.*] It will do, faith——Bravo, my lor! these girls have absolutely inspired me——If they are for a game at romps——Me voila pret! [*Sings and dances.*]——Oh!—that's an ugly twinge—but it's gone.——I have rather too much of the lily this morning in my complexion; a faint tincture of the rose will give a delicate spirit to my eyes for the day. [*Unlocks a drawer at the bottom of the glass, and takes out rouge; while he's painting himself, a knocking at the door.*

Canton. [*Behind.*] My lor! my lor!

Lord Og. Who's there? I won't be disturb'd.

Can. [*Without.*] My lor! my lor! here is Monsieur Sterling to pay his devoir to you this morn in your chambre.

Lord Og. [*Softly.*] What a fellow!——[*Aloud.*] I am extremely honoured by Mr. Sterling.—Why don't you see him in, Monsieur!——I wish he was at the bottom of his stinking canal. [*Door opens.*] Oh, my dear Mr. Sterling, you do me a great deal of honour.

Enter STERLING *and* LOVEWELL.

Sterl. I hope, my Lord, that your lordship slept

well in the night. I believe there are no better beds in Europe than I have—I spare no pains to get them, nor money to buy them. His majesty, God bless him, don't sleep upon a better out of his palace; and if I had said in it too, I hope no treason, my lord.

Lord Og. Your beds are like every thing else about you—incomparable! They not only make one rest well, but give one spirits, Mr. Sterling.

Sterl. What say you then, my lord, to another walk in the garden? you must see my water by day-light, and my walks, and my slopes, and my clumps, and my bridge, and my flow'ring trees, and my bed of Dutch tulips.—Matters look'd but dim last night, my lord. I feel the dew in my great toe—but I wold put on a cut-shoe, that I might be able to walk you about—I may be laid up to-morrow.

Lord Og. I pray Heaven you may! [*Aside.*

Sterl. What say you, my lord?

Lord Og. I was saying, sir, that I was in hopes of seeing the young ladies at breakfast: Mr. Sterling, they are, in my mind, the finest tulips in this part of the world—he, he, he!

Can. Bravissimo, my lor!—ha, ha, he!

Sterl. They shall meet your lordship in the garden—we won't lose our walk for them; I'll take you a little round before breakfast, and a larger before dinner, and in the evening you shall go the grand tour, as I call it—ha, ha, ha!

Lord Og. Not a-foot, I hope, Mr. Sterling; consider your gout, my good friend—you'll certainly be laid by the heels for your politeness—he, he, he!

Can. Ha, ha, ha! 'tis admirable, en verite! [*Laughing very heartily.*

Sterl. If my young man [*To* LOVEWELL.] here would laugh at my jokes, which he ought to do, as mounseer does at yours, my lord, we should be all life and mirth.

Lord Og. What say you, Canton, will you take

my kinsman into your tuition? You have certainly the most companionable laugh I ever met with, and never out of tune.

Can. But when your lordship is out of spirits.

Lord Og. Well said, Canton! But here comes my nephew to play his part.

Enter SIR JOHN MELVIL.

Well, Sir John, what news from the island of love? Have you been sighing and serenading this morning?

Sir John. I am glad to see your lordship in such spirits this morning.

Lord Og. I'm sorry to see you so dull, sir—What poor things, Mr. Sterling, these very young fellows are! they make love with faces as if they were burying the dead; though, indeed, a marriage sometimes may be properly called a burying of the living—eh, Mr. Sterling?

Sterl. Not if they have enough to live upon, my lord—Ha, ha, ha!

Can. Dat is all Monsieur Sterling tink of.

Sir John. [*Apart.*] Pr'ythee, Lovewell, come with me into the garden: I have something of consequence for you, and I must communicate it directly.

Love. [*Apart.*] We'll go together.——If your lordship and Mr. Sterling please, we'll prepare the ladies to attend you in the garden.

[*Exeunt* SIR JOHN *and* LOVEWELL.

Sterl. My girls are always ready; I make them rise soon, and go to bed early; their husbands shall have them with good constitutions, and good fortunes, if they have nothing else, my lord.

Lord Og. Fine things, Mr. Sterling!

Sterl. Fine things, indeed, my lord! Ah, my lord, had you not run off your speed in your youth, you had not been so crippled in your age, my lord.

Lord Og. Very pleasant—he, he, he!—— [*Half laughing.*

Sterl. Here's mounseer now, I suppose, is pretty near your lordship's standing; but having little to eat, and little to spend in his own country, he'll wear three of your lordship out—eating and drinking kills us all.

Lord Og. Very pleasant, I protest—What a vulgar dog! [*Aside.*

Can. My lor so old as me!—He is chicken to me—and look like a boy to pauvre me.

Sterl. Ha, ha, ha! Well said, mounseer—keep to that, and you'll live in any country of the world—Ha, ha, ha!—But, my lord, I will wait upon you in the garden: we have but a little time to breakfast—I'll go for my hat and cane, fetch a little walk with you, my lord, and then for the hot rolls and butter? [*Exit.*

Lord Og. I shall attend you with pleasure—Hot rolls and butter in July! I sweat with the thoughts of it. What a strange beast it is!

Can. C'est un barbare.

Lord Og. He is a vulgar dog, and if there was not so much money in the family, which I can't do without, I would leave him and his hot rolls and butter directly——Come along, monsieur!

[*Exeunt* LORD OGLEBY *and* CANTON.

SCENE II.

The Garden.

Enter SIR JOHN MELVIL *and* LOVEWELL.

Lov. In my room this morning? Impossible.

Sir John. Before five this morning, I promise you.

Lov. On what occasion?

Sir John. I was so anxious to disclose my mind to you, that I could not sleep in my bed—but I found that you could not sleep neither—The bird was flown, and the nest long since cold——Where was you, Lovewell?

Lov. Pooh! pr'ythee! ridiculous!

Sir John. Come now, which was it? Miss Sterling's maid? a pretty little rogue! or Miss Fanny's Abigail? a sweet soul too!—or—

Lov. Nay, nay, leave trifling, and tell me your business.

Sir John. Well, but where was you, Lovewell?

Lov. Walking—writing—what signifies where I was?

Sir John. Walking? yes, I dare say. It rained as hard as it could pour. Sweet refreshing showers to walk in! No, no, Lovewell. Now would I give twenty pounds to know which of the maids——

Lov. But your business! your business, Sir John!

Sir John. Let me a little into the secrets of the family.

Lov. Psha!

Sir John. Poor Lovewell, he can't bear it, I see. She charged you not to kiss and tell. Eh, Lovewell? However, though you will not honour me, with your confidence, I'll venture to trust you with mine.—What do you think of Miss Sterling?

Lov. What do I think of Miss Sterling?

Sir John. Ay? what do you think of her?

Lov. An odd question!—but I think her a smart, lively girl, full of mirth and sprightliness.

Sir John. All mischief and malice, I doubt.

Lov. How?

Sir John. But her person—what d'ye think of that?

Lov. Pretty and agreeable.

Sir John. A little grisette thing.

Lov. What is the meaning of all this?

Sir John. I'll tell you. You must know Lovewell, that notwithstanding all appearances—[*Seeing* LORD OGLEBY, *&c.*]—We are interrupted—When they are gone I'll explain.

Enter LORD OGLEBY, STIRLING, MRS. HEIDELBERG, MISS STERLING, *and* FANNY.

Lord Og. Great improvements, indeed, Mr. Sterling! wonderful improvements! The Four Seasons in lead, the flying Mercury, and the bason with Neptune in the middle, are in the very extreme of fine taste.

Sterl. The chief pleasure of a country-house is to make improvements, you know, my lord. I spare no expense, not I.——This is quite another-guess sort of a place than it was when I first took it, my lord. We were surrounded with trees. I cut down above fifty to make the lawn before the house, and let in the wind and the sun—smack-smooth, as you see.——Then I made a greenhouse out of the old laundry, and turned the brewhouse into a pinery.—The high octagon summer-house you see yonder is raised on the mast of a ship, given me by an East India captain, who has turned many a thousand of my money. It commands the whole road. All the coaches and chariots and chaises pass and repass under your eyes. I'll mount you up there in the afternoon, my lord.

Lord Og. No, I thank you, Mr. Sterling.

Sterl. 'Tis the pleasantest place in the world to take a pipe and a bottle, and so you shall say, my lord.

Lord Og. Ay, or a bowl of punch, or a can of flip, Mr. Sterling; for it looks like a cabin in the air.—If flying chairs were in use, the captain might make a voyage to the Indies in it still, if he had but a fair wind.

Can. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Mrs. Heidel. My brother's a little comical in his ideas, my lord!—But you'll excuse him.—I have a little Gothic dairy, fitted up entirely in my own taste.—In the evening I shall hope for the honour of your lordship's company to take a dish of tea there or a sullabub warm from the cow.

Lord Og. I have every moment a fresh opportunity of admiring the elegance of Mrs. Heidelberg—the very flower of delicacy, and cream of politeness.

Mrs. Heidel. O, my lord!—

[*Leering at* LORD OGLEBY.

Lord Og. O madam!—

[*Leering at* MRS. HEIDELBERG.

Sterl. How d'ye like these close walks, my lord?

Lord Og. A most excellent serpentine! It forms a perfect maze, and winds like a true lover's knot.

Sterl. Ay, here's none of your straight lines here——but all taste——zig-zag—crinkum-crankum—in and out—right and left—to and again—twisting and turning like a worm, my lord!

Lord Og. Admirably laid out indeed, Mr. Sterling!—You are a most excellent economist of your land, and make a little go a great way.——It lies together in as small parcels as if it was placed in pots out at your window in Grace-church street.

Can. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Lord Og. What d'ye laugh at, Canton?

Can. Ah! que cette similitude est drole! so clever what you say, mi lor!

Lord Og. [*To* FANNY.] You seem mightily engaged, madam. What are those pretty hands so busily employed about?

Fanny. Only making up a nosegay, my lord!—Will your lordship do me the honour of accepting it?

[*Presenting it.*

Lord Og. I'll wear it next my heart, madam!——I see the young creature dotes on me! [*Apart.*

Miss Sterl. Lord, sister! you've loaded his lordship with a bunch of flowers as big as the cook or the nurse carry to town, on a Monday morning, for a beau-pot.——Will your lordship give me leave to present you with this rose, and a sprig of sweet briar?

Lord Og. The truest emblems of yourself, madam! all sweetness and poignancy.—A little jealous, poor soul! [*Apart.*

Sterl. Now, my lord, if you please, I'll carry you to see my ruins.

Mrs. Heidel. You'll absolutely fatigue his lordship with over-walking, brother!

Lord Og. Not at all, madam! We're in the garden of Eden, you know: in the region of perpetual spring, youth and beauty. [*Leering at the women.*

Mrs. Heidel. Quite the man of qualaty, I vow and pertest. [*Apart.*

Can. Take a my arm, my lor!

[LORD OGLEBY *leans on him.*

Sterl. I'll only shew his lordship my ruins, and the cascade, and the Chinese bridge, and then we'll go in to breakfast.

Lord Og. Ruins, did you say, Mr. Sterling?

Sterl. Ay, ruins, my lord! and they are reckoned very fine ones too. You would think them ready to tumble on your head. It has just cost me a hundred and fifty pounds to put my ruins in thorough repair. This way, if your lordship pleases.

Lord Og. [*Going, stops.*] What steeple's that we see yonder?—the parish church, I suppose.

Sterl. Ha, ha, ha! that's admirable. It is no church at all, my lord; it is a spire that I have built against a tree, a field or two off, to terminate the prospect. One must always have a church, or an obelisk, or something to terminate the prospect, you know. That's a rule in taste, my lord!

Lord Og. Very ingenious, indeed! For my part, I desire no finer prospect than this I see before me.

[*Leering at the women.*] Simple, yet varied; bounded, yet extensive——Get away, Canton! [*Pushing away* CANTON.] I want no assistance—I'll walk with the ladies.

Sterl. This way my lord!

Lord Og. Lead on, sir!——We young folks here will follow you.——Madam!——Miss Sterling!—Miss Fanny! I attend you.

[*Exit, after* STERLING, *gallanting the ladies.*

Can. [*Following.*] He is cock o'de game, ma foy! [*Exit.*

Sir John. Harkye, Lovewell, you must not go—At length, thank Heaven, I have an opportunity to unbosom.——I know you are faithful, Lovewell, and flatter myself you would rejoice to serve me.

Lov. Be assured you may depend upon me.

Sir John. You must know then, notwithstanding all appearances, that this treaty of marriage between Miss Sterling and me will come to nothing.

Lov. How!

Sir John. It will be no match, Lovewell.

Lov. No match?

Sir John. No.

Lov. You amaze me. What should prevent it?

Sir John. I.

Lov. You! Wherefore?

Sir John. I don't like her.

Lov. Very plain, indeed! I never supposed that you were extremely devoted to her from inclination, but thought you always considered it as a matter of convenience, rather than affection.

Sir John. Very true. I came into the family without any impressions on my mind—with an unimpassioned indifference, ready to receive one woman as soon as another. I looked upon love, serious, sober love, as a chimera, and marriage as a thing of course, as you know most people do. But I, who was lately so great an infidel in love, am now one of its sincerest

votaries.——In short, my defection from Miss Sterling proceeds from the violence of my attachment to another.

Lov. Another! So, so! here will be fine work. And pray, who is she?

Sir John. Who is she! who can she be, but Fanny—the tender, amiable, engaging Fanny?

Lov. Fanny! What Fanny?

Sir John. Fanny Sterling. Her sister.—Is not she an angel, Lovewell?

Lov. Her sister? Confusion!—You must not think of it, Sir John.

Sir John. Not think of it? I can think of nothing else. Nay, tell me, Lovewell, was it possible for me to be indulged in a perpetual intercourse with two such objects as Fanny and her sister, and not find my heart led by insensible attraction towards her?—You seem confounded—Why don't you answer me?

Lov. I foresee that it must produce the worst consequences—the lawyers you know are hourly expected; the preliminaries almost finally settled between Lord Ogleby, and Mr. Sterling; and Miss Sterling herself ready to receive you as a husband.

Sir John. Why the banns have been published, and nobody has forbidden them it is true.—But you know either of the parties may change their minds even after they enter the church.

Lov. You think too lightly of this matter. It will be such an affront to the family, that they can never put up with it.

Sir John. I don't think so: for as to my transferring my passion from her to her sister, so much the better! for then, you know, I don't carry my affection out of the family.

Lov. Why did not you break this affair to the family before?

Sir John. Under such embarrassed circumstances as I have been, can you wonder at my irresolution or

perplexity? nothing but despair, the fear of losing my dear Fanny, could bring me to a declaration even now; and yet, I think I know Mr. Sterling so well that, strange as my proposal may appear, if I can make it advantageous to him as a money transaction, as I am sure I can, he will certainly come into it.

Lov. But even suppose he should, which I very much doubt, I don't think Fanny herself would listen to your addresses.

Sir John. You are deceived a little in that particular.

Lov. You'll find I am in the right.

Sir John. I have some little reason to think otherwise.

Lov. You have not declared your passion to her already?

Sir John. Yes, I have.

Lov. Indeed!—And—and—and how did she receive it?

Sir John. I think it is not very easy for me to make my addresses to any woman, without receiving some little encouragement.

Lov. Encouragement!—Did she give you any encouragement?

Sir John. I don't know what you call encouragement—but she blush'd—and cried—and desired me not to think of it any more:—upon which I pressed her hand—kissed it—swore she was an angel——and I could see it tickled her to the soul.

Lov. And did she express no surprise at your declaration?

Sir John. Why, faith, to say the truth, she was a little surprised——and she got away from me too, before I could thoroughly explain myself. If I should not meet with an opportunity of speaking to her, I must get you to deliver a letter for me.

Lov. I!—a letter!—I had rather have nothing—

Sir John. Nay, you promised me your assistance—

and I am sure you cannot scruple to make yourself useful on such an occasion.—You may, without suspicion, acquaint her verbally of my determined affection for her, and that I am resolved to ask her father's consent.

Lov. As to that, I—your commands, you know—that is, if she—Indeed, Sir John, I think you are in the wrong.

Sir John. Well—well—that's my concern—Ha! there she goes, by Heaven! along that walk yonder, d'ye see! I'll go to her immediately.

Lov. You are too precipitate. Consider what you are doing.

Sir John. I would not lose this opportunity for the universe.

Lov. Nay, pray don't go! Your violence and eagerness may overcome her spirits.—The shock will be too much for her. [*Detaining him.*

Sir John. Nothing shall prevent me.—Ha! now she turns into another walk.—Let me go! [*Breaks from him.*] I shall lose her. [*Going turns back.*] Be sure now to keep out of the way! If you interrupt us, I shall never forgive you. [*Exit, hastily.*

Lov. 'Sdeath! I can't bear this. In love with my wife! acquaint me with his passion for her! make his addresses before my face!—I shall break out before my time.—This was the meaning of Fanny's uneasiness. She could not encourage him—I am sure she could not.—Ha! they are turning into the walk, and coming this way. Shall I leave the place?—Leave him to solicit my wife! I can't submit to it.—They come nearer and nearer—if I stay, it will look suspicious—it may betray us, and incense him—They are here—I must go.—I am the most unfortunate fellow in the world. [*Exit.*

Enter FANNY *and* SIR JOHN.

Fanny. Leave me, Sir John, I beseech you leave

me! Nay, why will you persist to follow me with idle solicitations, which are an affront to my character, and an injury to your own honour.

Sir John. I know your delicacy, and tremble to offend it: but let the urgency of the occasion be my excuse! Consider that this day must determine my fate; and these are perhaps the only moments left me to incline you to warrant my passion, and to entreat you not to oppose the proposals I mean to open to your father.

Fanny. For shame, for shame, Sir John! Think of your previous engagements! Think of your own situation, and think of mine! What have you discovered in my conduct that might encourage you to so bold a declaration? I am shocked that you should venture to say so much, and blush that I should even dare to give it a hearing.—Let me begone!

Sir John. Nay, stay, madam, but one moment—Engagements! What engagements have been pretended on either side more than those of family convenience? I went on in the trammels of a matrimonial negociation, with a blind submission to your father and Lord Ogleby; but my heart soon claimed a right to be consulted. It has devoted itself to you, and obliges me to plead earnestly for the same tender interest in yours.

Fanny. Have a care, Sir John! do not mistake a depraved will for a virtuous inclination. By these common pretences of the heart half our sex are made fools, and a greater part of yours despise them for it.

Sir John. When I last urged you on this subject, you heard me with more temper, and I hoped with some compassion.

Fanny. You deceived yourself. If I forbore to exert a proper spirit; nay, if I did not even express the quickest resentment at your behaviour, it was only in consideration of that respect I wish to pay you, in

honour to my sister: and be assured, sir, woman as I am, that my vanity could reap no pleasure from a triumph that must result from the blackest treachery to her. [*Going.*

Sir John. One word, and I have done. [*Stopping her.*]——Your sister, I verily believe, neither entertains any real affection for me, or tenderness for you. Your father, I am inclined to think, is not much concerned by means of which of his daughters the families are united.——Now, as they cannot, shall not be connected, otherwise than by my union with you, why will you, from a false delicacy, oppose a measure so conducive to my happiness, and, I hope, your own? I love you, most passionately and sincerely love you.——If then you don't absolutely loath, abhor, and scorn me——If there is no other happier man——

Fanny. Hear me, sir, hear my final determination.—Were my father and sister as insensible as you are pleased to represent them;——were my heart for ever to remain disengaged to any other, I could not listen to your proposals.——What! you on the very eve of a marriage with my sister; I living under the same roof with her, bound not only by the laws of friendship and hospitality, but even the ties of blood, to contribute to her happiness, and not to conspire against her peace; the peace of a whole family; and that of my own too!—Away, away, Sir John!—— At such a time, and in such circumstances, your addresses only inspire me with horror.——Nay, you must detain me no longer—I will go.

Sir John. Do not leave me in absolute despair!—Give me a glimpse of hope! [*Falling on his knees.*

Fanny. I cannot.—Pray, Sir John! [*Struggling to go.*

Sir John. Shall this hand be given to another? [*Kissing her hand.*] No, I cannot endure it.——My whole soul is yours, and the whole happiness of my life is in your power.

Enter MISS STERLING.

Fanny. Ha! my sister is here. Rise, for shame, Sir John!

Sir John. Miss Sterling! [*Rising.*

Miss Sterl. I beg pardon, sir;—you'll excuse me, madam;—I have broken in upon you a little unopportunely, I believe—but I did not mean to interrupt you. I only came, sir, to let you know that breakfast waits, if you have finished your morning's devotions.

Sir John. I am very sensible, Miss Sterling, that this may appear particular, but——

Miss Sterl. O dear, Sir John, don't put yourself to the trouble of an apology.—The thing explains itself.

Sir John. It will soon, madam.—In the mean time, I can only assure you of my profound respect and esteem for you, and make no doubt of convincing Mr. Sterling of the honour and integrity of my intentions.——And, and——your humble servant, madam! [*Exit in confusion.*

Miss Sterl. Respect!—Insolence!—Esteem!—Very fine, truly!—And you, madam! my sweet, delicate, innocent, sentimental sister!—will you convince my papa too of the integrity of your intentions?

Fanny. Do not upbraid me, my dear sister! Indeed I don't deserve it. Believe me, you can't be more offended at his behaviour than I am, and I am sure it cannot make you half so miserable.

Miss Sterl. Make me miserable! You are mightily deceived, madam; it gives me no sort of uneasiness, I assure you.—A base fellow!—As for you, miss, the pretended softness of your disposition, your artful good-nature, never imposed upon me. I always knew you to be sly, and envious, and deceitful.

Fanny. Indeed you wrong me.

Miss Sterl. Oh, you are all goodness, to be sure! —Did not I find him on his knees before you? Did not I see him kiss your sweet hand? Did not I hear his protestations? Was not I a witness of your dissembled modesty?——No, no, my dear! don't imagine that you can make a fool of your elder sister so easily.

Fanny. Sir John, I own, is to blame; but I am above the thoughts of doing you the least injury.

Miss Sterl. We shall try that, madam.——I hope, miss, you'll be able to give a better account to my papa and my aunt—for they shall both know of this matter, I promise you. [*Exit.*

Fanny. How unhappy I am! my distresses multiply upon me.—Mr. Lovewell must now become acquainted with Sir John's behaviour to me, and in a manner that may add to his uneasiness. My father, instead of being disposed by fortunate circumstances to forgive any transgressions, will be previously incensed against me. My sister and my aunt will become irreconcilably my enemies, and rejoice in my disgrace.—Yet, at all events, I am determined on a discovery. I dread it, and am resolved to hasten it. It is surrounded with more horrors every instant, as it appears every instant more necessary.

[*Exit.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A Hall.

Enter a SERVANT, *conducting in* SERGEANT FLOWER, *and* COUNSELLORS TRAVERSE *and* TRUEMAN, *all Booted.*

Serv. This way, if you please, gentlemen! my master is at breakfast with the family at present; but I'll let him know, and he will wait on you immediately.

Flow. Mighty well, young man, mighty well.

Serv. Please to favour me with your names, gentlemen.

Flow. Let Mr. Sterling know, that Mr. Sergeant Flower, and two other gentlemen of the bar, are come to wait on him according to his appointment.

Serv. I will, sir. [*Going.*

Flow. And harkye, young man, [SERVANT *returns.*] desire my servant—Mr. Sergeant Flower's servant, to bring in my green and gold saddle-cloth and pistols, and lay them down here in the hall, with my portmanteau.

Serv. I will, sir. [*Exit.*

Flow. Well, gentlemen! the settling these marriage articles falls conveniently enough, almost just on the eve of the circuits.——Let me see—the Home, the Midland, and Western; ay, we can all cross the country well enough to our several desti-

nations.——Traverse, when do you begin at Hertford?

Trav. The day after to-morrow.

Flow. That is commission-day with us at Warwick too. But my clerk has retainers for every cause in the paper; so it will be time enough if I am there the next morning. Besides, I have about half a dozen cases that have lain by me ever since the spring assizes, and I must tack opinions to them before I see my country clients again—so I will take the evening before me—and then *current calamo*, as I say—eh, Traverse.

Trav. True, Mr. Sergeant—and the easiest thing in the world too—for those country attornies are such ignorant dogs, that in case of the devise of an estate to A and his heirs for ever, they'll make a query whether he takes it in fee or in tail.

Flow. Do you expect to have much to do on the home circuit these assizes?

Trav. Not much Nisi Prius business, but a good deal on the crown side, I believe.—The goals are brim-full—and some of the felons in good circumstances, and likely to be tolerable clients.—Let me see!—I am engaged for three highway robberies, two murders, one forgery, and half a dozen larcenies, at Kingston.

Flow. A pretty decent goal delivery!—Do you expect to bring off Darkin, for the robbery on Putney Common? Can you make out your alibi?

Trav. Oh, no!—the crown witnesses are sure to prove our identity.—We shall certainly be hang'd; but that don't signify.

Flow. Mr. Trueman, I think you are concerned for Lord Ogleby in this affair? [*To* TRUEMAN.

True. I am, sir—I have the honour to be related to his lordship, and hold some courts for him in Somersetshire—go the Western circuit—and attend the sessions at Exeter, merely because his lordship's

interests and property lie in that part of the kingdom.

Flow. Ha!——and pray, Mr. Trueman, how long have you been called to the bar?

True. About nine years and three quarters.

Flow. Ah!——I don't know that I ever had the pleasure of seeing you before.——I wish you success, young gentleman!

Enter STERLING.

Sterl. Oh, Mr. Sergeant Flower, I am glad to see you! gentlemen, your servant!——Well, has that snail-paced conveyancer, old Ferret, of Gray's-Inn, settled the articles at last? Do you approve of what he has done? Will his tackle hold, tight and strong? ——Eh, Master Sergeant?

Flow. My friend Ferret's slow and sure, sir—— But then, *cerius aut citius*, as we say, sooner or later, Mr. Sterling, he is sure to put his business out of hand as he should do. My clerk has brought the writings, and all other instruments along with him, and the settlement is, I believe, as good a settlement as any settlement on the face of the earth.

Sterl. But that damned mortgage of 60,000*l.*— There don't appear to be any other incumbrances, I hope?

Trav. I can answer for that, sir—and that will be cleared off immediately on the payment of the first part of Miss Sterling's portion. You agree, on your part, to come down with 80,000*l.*

Sterl. Down on the nail. Ay, ay, my money is ready to-morrow, if he please—he shall have it in India-bonds, or notes, or how he chooses. Your lords and your dukes, and your people at the court-end of the town, stick at payments sometimes—— debts unpaid, no credit lost with them——but no fear of us substantial fellows: Eh, Mr. Serjeant?

Flow. Sir John having last term, according to agreement, levied a fine, and suffered a recovery, has hitherto cut off the entail of the Ogleby estate, for the better effecting the purposes of the present intended marriage; on which abovementioned Ogleby estate, a jointure of 2000*l.* per annum is secured to your eldest daughter, now Elizabeth Sterling, spinster, and the whole estate, after the death of the aforesaid earl, descends to the heirs male of Sir John Melvil, on the body of the aforesaid Elizabeth Sterling lawfully to be begotten.

Trav. Very true; and Sir John is to be put in immediate possession of as much of his lordship's Somersetshire estate as lies in the manors of Hogmore and Cranford; amounting to between two and three thousand per annum, and at the death of Mr. Sterling, a further sum of seventy thousand——

Enter SIR JOHN MELVIL.

Sterl. Ah, Sir John!—Here we are—hard at it—paving the road to matrimony.

Sir John. I am sorry to interrupt you, sir, but I hope that both you and these gentlemen will excuse me. Having something very particular for your private ear, I took the liberty of following you, and beg you will oblige me with an audience immediately.

Sterl. Ay, with all my heart!—Gentlemen, Mr. Sergeant, you'll excuse it—Business must be done, you know. The writings will keep cold till to-morrow morning.

Flow. I must be at Warwick, Mr. Sterling, the day after.

Sterl. Nay, nay, I sha'n't part with you to-night, gentlemen, I promise you—My house is very full, but I have beds for you all, beds for your servants, and stabling for all your horses. Come, take a turn

in the garden,—my servants shall attend you—Call for what you please;—do as you please;—make yourselves quite at home, I beg of you.—Here, Thomas! Harry! William! wait on these gntlemen!—[*Follows the lawyers out, bawling and talking, and then returns to* SIR JOHN.]—And now, sir, I am entirely at your service. What are your commands with me, Sir John?

Sir John. After having carried the negociation between our families to so great a length I am extremely concerned, Mr. Sterling, to be the involuntary cause of any uneasiness,

Sterl. Uneasiness! what uneasiness. You agree, on such and such conditions, to receive my daughter for a wife; on the same conditions I agree to receive you as a son-in-law; and as to all the rest, it follows of course, you know, as regularly as the payment of a bill after acceptance.

Sir John. Pardon me, sir, more uneasiness has arisen than you are aware of; and unless you will oblige me with the assistance of your friendship, I foresee the speedy progress of discontent and animosity through the whole family.

Sterl. What the deuce is all this? I don't understand a single syllable.

Sir John. In one word then—it will be absolutely impossible for me to fulfil my engagements in regard to Miss Sterling.

Sterl. How, Sir John? Do you mean to put an affront upon my family? What! refuse to——

Sir John. Be assured, sir, that I neither mean to affront, nor forsake your family. My only fear is, that you should desert me; for the whole happiness of my life depends on my being connected with your family by the nearest and tenderest ties in the world.

Sterl. Why, did not you tell me, but a moment ago, that it was absolutely impossible for you to marry my daughter?

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Sir John. True. But you have another daughter, sir——

Sterl. Well!

Sir John. Who has obtained the most absolute dominion over my heart. I have already declared my passion to her; and if you will but give a sanction to my present addresses, the uncommon merit of Miss Sterling will no doubt recommend her to a person of equal, if not superior rank to myself, and our families may still be allied by my union with Miss Fanny.

Sterl. Mighty fine, truly! Why, what the plague do you make of us, Sir John? Do you come to market for my daughter, like servants at a statute fair? Do you think that I will suffer you, or any man in the world, to come into my house, like the Grand Signior, and throw the handkerchief first to one, and then to t'other, just as he pleases? Do you think I drive a kind of African slave-trade with them; and——

Sir John. A moment's patience, sir! Nothing but the excess of my passion for Miss Fanny should have induced me to take any step that had the least appearance of disrespect to any part of your family; and even now I am desirous to atone for my transgression, by making the most adequate compensation that lies in my power.

Sterl. Compensation! What compensation can you possibly make in such a case as this, Sir John?

Sir John. Come, come, Mr. Sterling, I know you to be a man of sense, a man of business, a man of the world. I'll deal frankly with you; and you shall see that I don't desire a change of measures for my own gratification without endeavouring to make it advantageous to you.

Ster. What advantage can your inconstancy be to me, Sir John?

Sir John. I'll tell you, sir.—You know that by the

articles at present subsisting between us, on the day of my marriage with Miss Sterling, you agree to pay down the gross sum of eighty thousand pounds.

Sterl. Well.

Sir John. Now if you will but consent to my waving that marriage——

Sterl. I agree to your waving that marriage! Impossible, Sir John!

Sir John. I hope not, sir; as, on my part, I will agree to wave my right to thirty thousand pounds of the fortune I was to receive with her.

Sterl. Thirty thousand d'ye say?

Sir John. Yes, sir; and accept of Miss Fanny with fifty thousand instead of fourscore.

Sterl. Fifty thousand—— [*Pausing.*

Sir John. Instead of fourscore.

Sterl. Why—why—there may be something in that——Let me see—Fanny with fifty thousand, instead of Betsey with fourscore.—Why—to do you justice, Sir John, there is something fair and open in your proposal; and since I find you do not mean to put an affront upon the family——

Sir John. Nothing was ever farther from my thoughts, Mr. Sterling. And after all, the whole affair is nothing extraordinary—such things happen every day, and as the world has only heard generally of a treaty between the families, when this marriage takes place nobody will be the wiser, if we have but discretion enough to keep our own counsel.

Sterl. True, true; and since you only transfer from one girl to the other, it is no more than transferring so much stock, you know.

Sir John. The very thing!

Sterl. Odso! I had quite forgot. We are reckoning without our host here—there is another difficulty——

Sir John. You alarm me. What can that be?

Sterl. I can't stir a step in this business without

consulting my sister Heidelberg. The family has very great expectations from her, and we must not give her any offence.

Sir John. But if you come into this measure, surely she will be so kind as to consent——

Sterl. I don't know that; Betsey is her darling, and I can't tell how far she may resent any slight that seems to be offered to her favourite niece. However, I'll do the best I can for you. You shall go and break the matter to her first, and by that time I may suppose that your rhetoric has prevailed on her to listen to reason, I will step in to reinforce your arguments.

Sir John. I'll fly to her immediately—You promise me your assistance?

Sterl. I do.

Sir John. Ten thousand thanks for it! and now success attend me! [*Going.*

Sterl. Harkye, Sir John! [SIR JOHN *returns.*] Not a word of the thirty thousand to my sister, Sir John.

Sir John. O, I am dumb, I am dumb, sir. [*Going.*

Sterl. You'll remember it is thirty thousand?

Sir John. To be sure I do.

Sterl. But, Sir John! one thing more. [SIR JOHN *returns.*] My lord must know nothing of this stroke of friendship between us.

Sir John. Not for the world. Let me alone! let me alone! [*Offering to go.*

Sterl. [*Holding him.*] And when every thing is agreed, we must give each other a bond to be held fast to the bargain.

Sir John. To be sure. A bond by all means! a bond, or whatever you please. [*Exit hastily.*

Sterl. I should have thought of more conditions—he's in a humour to give me every thing. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment.

Enter MRS. HEIDELBERG *and* MISS STERLING.

Miss Sterl. This is your gentle-looking, soft-speaking, sweet-smiling, affable, Miss Fanny for you!

Mrs. Heidel. My Miss Fanny! I disclaim her.—With all her arts she never did insinuate herself into my good graces; and yet she has a way with her that deceives man, woman and child, except you and me, niece.

Miss Sterl. O ay—she wants nothing but a crook in her hand, and a lamb under her arm, to be a perfect picture of innocence and simplicity.

Mrs. Heidel. Just as I was drawn at Amsterdam when I went over to visit my husband's relations.

Miss Sterl. And then she's so mighty good to servants—"Pray John, do this—pray, Tom, do that—thank you, Jenny,"—and then so humble to her relations—"To be sure sure, papa—as my aunt pleases—my sister knows best." But, with all her demureness and humility, she has no objection to be Lady Melvil, it seems, nor to any wickedness that can make her so.

Mrs. Heidel. She Lady Melvil! Compose yourself, niece! I'll ladyship her indeed:—a little creppin, cantin—She sha'n't be the better for a farden of my money. But tell me, child, how does this intriguing with Sir John correspond with her partiality to Lovewell? I don't see a concatunation here.

Miss Sterl. There I was deceived, madam, I took all their whisperings and stealings into corners to be the mere attraction of vulgar minds; but, behold!

their private meetings were not to contrive their own insipid happiness, but to conspire against mine. But I know whence proceeds Mr. Lovewell's resentment to me. I could not stoop to be familiar with my father's clerk, and so I have lost his interest.

Mrs. Heidel. My spurit to a T.—My dear child! [*Kisses her.*]—Mr. Heidelberg lost his election for member of parliament, because I would not demean myself to be slobbered about by drunken shoemakers, beastly cheesemongers, and tallow-chandlers. However, niece, I can't help diffuring a little in opinion from you in this matter. My experunce and sagacity makes me still suspect that there is something more between her and that Lovewell, notwithstanding this affair of Sir John. I had my eye upon them the whole time of breakfast. Sir John, I observed, looked a little confounded, indeed, though I knew nothing of what had passed in the garden. You seemed to sit upon thorns too: but Fanny and Mr. Lovewell made quite another-guess sort of a figur; and were as perfect a pictur of two distrest lovers, as if it had been drawn by Raphael Angelo. As to Sir John and Fanny, I want a matter of fact.

Miss Sterl. Matter of fact, madam! Did not I come unexpectedly upon them? Was not Sir John kneeling at her feet, and kissing her hand? Did not he look all love, and she all confusion? Is not that matter of fact? and did not Sir John, the moment that papa was called out of the room to the lawyermen, get up from breakfast, and follow him immediately? And I warrant you that by this time he has made proposals to him to marry my sister.—Oh, that some other person, an earl or a duke, would make his addresses to me, that I might be revenged on this monster!

Mrs. Heidel. Be cool, child! you shall be Lady Melvil, in spite of all their caballins, if it costs me

ten thousand pounds to turn the scale. Sir John may apply to my brother indeed; but I'll make them all know who governs in this fammaly.

Miss Sterl. As I live, madam, yonder comes Sir John. A base man! I can't endure the sight of him. I'll leave the room this instant. [*Disordered.*

Mrs. Heidel. Poor thing! Well, retire to your own chamber, child: I'll give it him, I warrant you; and by and by I'll come and let you know all that has past between us.

Miss Sterl. Pray do, madam.—[*Looking back.*]—A vile wretch! [*Exit in a rage.*

Enter SIR JOHN MELVIL.

Sir John. Your most obedient humble servant, madam. [*Bowing very respectfully.*

Mrs. Heidel. Your servant, Sir John.

[*Dropping a half curtsey, and pouting.*

Sir John. Miss Sterling's manner of quitting the room on my approach, and the visible coolness of your behaviour to me, madam, convince me that she has acquainted you with what passed this morning.

Mrs. Heidel. I am very sorry, Sir John, to be made acquainted with any thing that should induce me to change the opinion which I would always wish to entertain of a person of qualaty. [*Pouting.*

Sir John. It has always been my ambition to merit the best opinion from Mrs. Heidelberg; and when she comes to weigh circumstances, I flatter myself——

Mrs. Heidel. You do flatter yourself, if you imagine that I can approve of your behavio ur to my niece, Sir John.—And give me leave to tell you, Sir John, that you have been drawn into an action much beneath you, Sir John; and that I look upon every injury offered to Miss Betty Sterling, as an affront to myself, Sir John. [*Warmly.*

Sir John. I would not offend you for the world madam; and I hope your discernment and good sense will think it rather a point of honour to renounce engagements, which I could not fulfil so strictly as I ought; since the new object as well as the first, has the honour of being your niece, madam.

Mrs. Heidel. I disclaim her as a niece, Sir John; Miss Sterling disclaims her as a sister, and the whole fammaly must disclaim her, for her monstrous baseness and treachery.

Sir John. Indeed she has been guilty of none, madam. Her hand and her heart are, I am sure, entirely at the disposal of yourself, and Mr. Sterling. And if you should not oppose my inclinations, I am sure of Mr. Sterling's consent, madam.

Mrs. Heidel. Indeed!

Sir John. Quite certain, madam.

Enter STERLING.

Sterl. [*Behind.*] So! they seem to be coming to terms already. I may venture to make my appearance.

Mrs. Heidel. To marry Fanny!

[STERLING *advances by degrees.*

Sir John. Yes, madam.

Mrs. Heidel. My brother has given his consent, you say?

Sir John. In the most ample manner, with no other restriction than the failure of your concurrence, madam. [*Sees* STERLING.]—Oh, here's Mr. Sterling, who will confirm what I have told you.

Mrs. Heidel. What! have you consented to give up your own daughter in this manner, brother?

Sterl. Give her up! Heaven forbid; no, not give her up, sister; only in case that you——Zounds, I am afraid you have said too much, Sir John.

[*Apart to* SIR JOHN.

Mrs. Heidel. Yes, yes I see now that it is true enough what my niece told me. You are all plottin and caballin against her Pray, does Lord Ogleby know of this affair.

Sir John. I have not yet made him acquainted with it, madam.

Mrs. Heidel. No, I warrant you. I thought so.—And so his lordship and myself, truly, are not to be consulted till the last.

Sterl. What! did not you consult my lord? Oh, fie for shame, Sir John!

Sir John. Nay, but, Mr. Sterling——

Mrs. Heidel. We who are the persons of most consequence and experunce in the two fammilies, are to know nothing of the matter, till the whole is as good as concluded upon. But his lordship, I am sure, will have more generosaty than to countenance such a perceeding. And I could not have expected such behaviour from a person of your qualaty, Sir John.—And as for you, brother——

Sterl. Nay, nay, but hear me, sister.

Mrs. Heidel. I am perfectly ashamed of you.—Have you no spurrit? no more concern for the honour of our famınaly than to consent——

Sterl. Consent! I consent! As I hope for mercy, I never gave my consent.—Did I consent, Sir John?

Sir John. Not absolutely, without Mrs. Heidelberg's concurrence. But, in case of her approbation——

Sterl. Ay, I grant you, if my sister approved——But that's quite another thing, you know——

[*To* MRS. HEIDELBERG.

Mrs. Heidel. Your sister approve, indeed!——I thought you knew her better, brother Sterling.—What! approve of having your eldest daughter returned upon your hands, and exchanged for the younger!—I am surprized how you could listen to such a scandalous proposal.

Sterl. I tell you, I never did listen to it.—Did not I say, that I would be entirely governed by my sister, Sir John?——And unless she agreed to your marrying Fanny——

Mrs. Heidel. I agree to his marrying Fanny!——abominable!——The man is absolutely out of his senses——Can't that wise head of yours foresee the consequence of all this, brother Sterling? Will Sir John take Fanny without a fortune?—No!——After you have settled the largest part of your property on your youngest daughter, can there be an equal portion left for the eldest?—No!—Does not this overturn the whole systum of the fammaly?—Yes, yes, yes!—You know I was always for my niece Betsey's marrying a person of the very first qualaty. That was my maxum:—and, therefore, much the largest settlement was, of course, to be made upon her. As for Fanny, if she could, with a fortune of twenty or thirty thousand pounds, get a knight, or a member of parliament, or a rich common council-man, for a husband, I thought it might do very well.

Sir John. But if a better match should offer itself, why should it not be accepted, madam?

Mrs. Heidel. What, at the expense of her elder sister?—O fie, Sir John!—How could you bear to hear such an indignaty, brother Sterling?

Sterl. I! Nay, I shan't hear of it, I promise you.—I can't hear of it, indeed, Sir John.

Mrs. Heidel. But you have heard of it, brother Sterling——You know you have, and sent Sir John to propose it to me. But if you can give up your daughter, I shan't forsake my niece, I assure you.—Ah, if my poor dear Mr. Heidelberg, and our sweet babes had been alive, he would not have behaved so.

Sterl. Did I, Sir John?—Nay, speak!—Bring me off, or we are ruined. [*Apart to* SIR JOHN.

Sir John. Why, to be sure, to speak the truth——

Mrs. Heidel. To speak the truth, I'm ashamed of you both.—But have a care what you are about, brother! have a care, I say.—The counsellors are in the house, I hear; and if every thing is not settled to my liking, I'll have nothing more to say to you, if I live these hundred years.——I'll go over to Holland, and settle with Mr. Vanderspracken, my poor husband's first cousin, and my own fammaly shall never be the better for a farden of my money, I promise you. [*Exit.*

Sterl. I thought so. I knew she never would agree to it.

Sir John. 'Sdeath, how unfortunate! What can we do, Mr. Sterling?

Sterl. Nothing.

Sir John. What, must our agreement break off the moment it is made, then?

Sterl. It can't be helped, Sir John.—The family, as I told you before, have great expectations from my sister; and if this matter proceeds, you hear yourself that she threatens to leave us.—My brother Heidelberg was a warm man—a very warm man, and died worth a plumb, at least:—a plumb! ay, I warrant you, he died worth a plumb and a half.

Sir John. Well; but if I——

Sterl. And then, my sister has three or four very good mortgages, a deal of money in the three per cents, and old South Sea Annuities, besides large concerns in the Dutch and French funds. The greatest part of all this she means to leave to our family.

Sir John. I can only say, sir——

Sterl. Why, your offer of the difference of thirty thousand was very fair and handsome, to be sure, Sir John.

Sir John. Nay, but I am even willing to——

Sterl. Ay, but if I was to accept it against her will, I might lose above a hundred thousand; so you see the balance is against you, Sir John.

Sir John. But is there no way, do you think, of prevailing on Mrs. Heidelberg to grant her consent?

Sterl. I am afraid not. However, when her passion is a little abated—for she's very passionate—you may try what can be done: but you must not use my name any more, Sir John.

Sir John. Suppose I was to prevail on Lord Ogleby to apply to her, do you think that would have any influence over her?

Sterl. I think he would be more likely to persuade her to it than any other person in the family. She has a great respect for Lord Ogleby. She loves a lord.

Sir John. I'll apply to him this very day. And if he should prevail on Mrs. Heidelberg, I may depend on your friendship, Mr. Sterling?

Sterl. Ay, ay, I shall be glad to oblige you, when it is in my power; but as the account stands now, you see it is not upon the figures. And so your servant, Sir John. [*Exeunt,*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

A Room.

Enter MR. STERLING, MRS. HEIDELBERG, *and* MISS STERLING.

Sterl. What! will you send Fanny to town, sister?

Mrs. Heidel. To-morrow morning. I've given orders about it already.

Sterl. Indeed!

Mrs. Heidel. Posatively.

Sterl. But consider, sister, at such a time as this, what an odd appearance it will have.

Mrs. Heidel. Not half so odd as her behaviour, brother.—This time was intended for happiness, and I'll keep no incendiaries here to destroy it. I insist on her going off to-morrow morning.

Sterl. I'm afraid this is all your doing, Betsey.

Miss Sterl. No, indeed, papa. My aunt knows that it is not.—For all Fanny's baseness to me, I am sure I would not do or say any thing to hurt her with you or my aunt for the world.

Mrs. Heidel. Hold your tongue, Betsey; I will have my way.—When she is packed off, every thing will go on as it should do.—Since they are at their intrigues, I'll let them see that we can act with vigur on our part; and the sending her out of the way, shall be the purluminary step to all the rest of my perceedings.

Sterl. Well, but, sister——

Mrs. Heidel. It does not signify talking, brother Sterling, for I'm resolved to be rid of her, and I will. —Come along, child. [*To* MISS STERLING.] The postshay shall be at the door by six o'clock in the morning; and if Miss Fanny does not get into it, why, I will—and so there's an end of the matter. [*Bounces out with* MISS STERLING; *then returns.*] One word more, brother Sterling.—I expect that you will take your eldest daughter in your hand, and make a formal complaint to Lord Ogleby of Sir John Melvil's behaviour.—Do this, brother;—shew a proper regard for the honour of your fammaly yourself, and I shall throw in my mite to the raising of it. If not——but now you know my mind. So act as you please, and take the consequences. [*Exit.*

Sterl. The devil's in the women for tyranny!—Mothers, wives, mistresses, or sisters, they always will govern us.——As to my sister Heidelberg, she knows the strength of her purse, and domineers upon the credit of it.—"I will do this," and "you shall do that," and "you shall do t'other—or else the fammaly sha'n't have a farden of"—[*Mimicking.*]—So absolute with her money!—But, to say the truth, nothing but money can make us absolute, and so we must even make the best of her. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Garden.

Enter LORD OGLEBY *and* CANTON.

Lord Og. What! Mademoiselle Fanny to be sent away!—Why?—Wherefore?—What's the meaning of all this?

Can. Je ne sçais pas—I know nothing.

Lord Og. It can't be—it sha'n't be:—I protest against the measure. She's a fine girl, and I had much rather that the rest of the family was annihilated, than that she should leave us.—Her vulgar father, that's the very abstract of 'Change-Alley—the aunt that's always endeavouring to be a fine lady—and the pert sister, for ever shewing that she is one, are horrid company indeed; and without her, would be intolerable. Ah, la petite Fanchon! she's the thing: isn't she, Canton?

Can. Dere is very good sympatie entre vous and dat young lady, my lor.

Lord Og. I'll not be left among these Goths and Vandals, your Sterlings, your Heidelbergs, and Devilbergs; if she does, I'll positively go too.

Can. In de same post-chay, my lor? You have no objection to dat, I believe, nor mademoiselle neither too—ha, ha, ha!

Lord Og. Pr'ythee hold thy foolish tongue, Canton. Does thy Swiss stupidity imagine that I can see and talk with a fine girl without desires?—My eyes are involuntarily attracted by beautiful objects—I fly as naturally to a fine girl——

Can. As de fine girl to you, my lor—ha, ha, ha! you always fly togedre, like un pair de pigeons——

Lord Og. Like un pair de pigeons—[*Mocks him.*]—Vous etes un sot, Mons. Canton.—Thou art always dreaming of my intrigues, and never seest me badiner but you suspect mischief, you old fool, you.

Can. I am fool, I confess, but not always fool in dat, my lor—he, he, he!

Lord Og. He, he, he!——Thou art incorrigible, but thy absurdities amuse one. Thou art like my rappee here, [*Takes out his box.*] a most ridiculous superfluity; but a pinch of thee now and then is a most delicious treat.

Can. You do me great honeur, mi lor.

Lord Og. 'Tis fact, upon my soul. Thou art properly my cephalic snuff, and art no bad medicine against megrims, vertigoes, and profound thinking —ha, ha, ha, ha!

Can. Your flatterie, my lor, vil make me too prode.

Lord Og. The girl has some little partiality for me, to be sure: but pr'ythee, Cant, is not that Miss Fanny yonder?

Can. [*Looking with a glass.*] Ah—la voilà! En verité, 'tis she, my lor——'tis one of de pigeons—— de pigeons d'amour.

Lord Og. Don't be ridiculous, you old monkey. [*Smiling.*

Can. I am monkee, I am ole, but I have eye, I have ear, and a little understand, now and den.

Lord Og. Taisez vous, bête!

Can. Elle vous attend, my lor. She vil make a love to you.

Lord Og. Will she? Have at her then! A fine girl can't oblige me more. Egad, I find myself a little enjoué——Come along, Cant! she is but in the next walk—but there is such a deal of this damned crinkum-crankum, as Sterling calls it, that one sees people for half an hour before one can get to them ——Allons, Mons. Canton, allons, donc!

[*Exeunt, singing in French.*

SCENE III.

Another Part of the Garden.

Enter LOVEWELL *and* FANNY.

Lov. My dear Fanny, I cannot bear your distress! it overcomes all my resolutions, and I am prepared for the discovery.

Fanny. But how can it be effected before my departure?

Lov. I'll tell you.—Lord Ogleby seems to entertain a visible partiality for you; and, notwithstanding the peculiarities of his behaviour, I am sure that he is humane at the bottom. His influence and authority will put an end to Sir John's solicitations, remove your aunt's and sister's unkindness and suspicions, and, I hope, reconcile your father and the whole family to our marriage.

Fanny. Heaven grant it! Where is my lord?

Lov. I have heard him and Canton, since dinner, singing French songs under the great walnut-tree by the parlour door. If you meet with him in the garden, you may disclose the whole immediately.

Fanny. Dreadful as the task is, I'll do it. Any thing is better than this continual anxiety.

Love. By that time the discovery is made, I will appear to second you—Ha! here comes my lord.—Now, my dear Fanny, summon up all your spirits, plead our cause powerfully, and be sure of success—

[*Going.*

Fanny. Ah, don't leave me!

Lov. Nay, you must let me.

Fanny. Well, since it must be so, I'll obey you, if I have the power. Oh, Lovewell!

Lov. Consider, our situation is very critical. To-morrow morning is fixed for your departure, and if we lose this opportunity, we may wish in vain for another.—He approaches.—I must retire.—Speak, my dear Fanny, speak, and make us happy! [*Exit.*

Fanny. Good heaven! what a situation am I in! What shall I do? What shall I say to him? I am all confusion.

Enter LORD OGLEBY *and* CANTON.

Lord Og. To see so much beauty so solitary, madam, is a satire upon mankind, and 'tis fortunate

that one man has broke in upon your reverie for the credit of our sex. I say one, madam; for poor Canton here, from age and infirmities, stands for nothing.

Can. Nothing at all, indeed.

Fanny. Your lordship does me great honour.—I had a favour to request, my lord!

Lord Og. A favour, madam!—To be honoured with your commands is an inexpressible favour done to me, madam.

Fanny. If your lordship could indulge me with the honour of a moment's——What's the matter with me? [*Aside.*

Lord Og. The girl's confused—He!—here's something in the wind, faith—I'll have a tete-à-tete with her—Allez vous en! [*To* CANTON.

Can. I go——Ah, pauvre mademoiselle! My lor, have pitié upon the poor pigeone!

Lord Og. I'll knock you down, Cant, if you're impertinent. [*Smiling.*

Can. Den I must away—[*Shuffles along.*]—You are mosh please, for all dat. [*Aside and exit.*

Fanny. I shall sink with apprehension. [*Aside.*

Lord Og. What a sweet girl!—she's a civilized being, and atones for the barbarism of the rest of the family.

Fanny. My lord! I—— [*She curtsies, and blushes.*

Lord Og. [*Addressing her.*] I look upon it, madam, to be one of the luckiest circumstances of my life, that I have this moment the honour of receiving your commands, and the satisfaction of confirming with my tongue what my eyes perhaps have but too weakly expressed—that I am, literally, the humblest of your servants.

Fanny. I think myself greatly honoured by your lordship's partiality to me; but it distresses me that I am obliged, in my present situation, to apply to it for protection.

Lord Og: I am happy in your distress, madam, because it gives me an opportunity to shew my zeal. Beauty to me is a religion, in which I was born and bred a bigot, and would die a martyr.—I'm in tolerable spirits, faith! [*Aside.*

Fanny. There is not perhaps, at this moment, a more distressed creature than myself. Affection, duty, hope, despair, and a thousand different sentiments are struggling in my bosom; and even the presence of your lordship, to whom I have flown for protection, adds to my perplexity.

Lord Og. Does it, madam—Venus forbid!—My old fault; the devil's in me, I think, for perplexing young women. [*Aside, and smiling.*] Take courage, madam! dear Miss Fanny, explain—You have a powerful advocate in my breast, I assure you—My heart, madam——I am attached to you by all the laws of sympathy and delicacy.—By my honour I am.

Fanny. Then I will venture to unburden my mind. —Sir John Melvil, my lord, by the most misplaced and mistimed declaration of affection for me, has made me the unhappiest of women.

Lord Og. How, madam! Has Sir John made his addresses to you?

Fanny. He has, my lord, in the strongest terms. But I hope it is needless to say, that my duty to my father, love to my sister, and regard to the whole family, as well as the great respect I entertain for your lordship, [*Curtsying.*] made me shudder at his addresses.

Lord Og. Charming girl!—Proceed, my dear Miss Fanny, proceed!

Fanny. In a moment—give me leave, my lord!— But if what I have to disclose should be received with anger or displeasure——

Lord Og. Impossible, by all the tender powers!— Speak, I beseech you, or I shall divine the cause before you utter it.

Fanny. Then, my lord, Sir John's addresses are not only shocking to me in themselves, but are more particularly disagreeable to me at this time—as—as— [*Hesitating.*

Lord Og. As what, madam?

Fanny. As—pardon my confusion—I am entirely devoted to another

Lord Og. If this is not plain, the devil's in it—— [*Aside.*] But tell me, my dear Miss Fanny, for I must know; tell me the how, the when, and the where—Tell me——

Enter CANTON *hastily.*

Can. My lor, my lor, my lor!

Lord Og. Damn your Swiss impertinence! how durst you interrupt me in the most critical melting moment that ever love and beauty honoured me with?

Can. I demande pardonne, my lor! Sir John Melvil, my lor, sent me to beg you do him de honeur to speak a little to your lorship.

Lord Og. I'm not at leisure—I am busy—Get away, you stupid old dog, you Swiss rascal, or I'll—

Can. Fort bien, my lor.

[CANTON *goes out on tip-toe.*

Lord Og. By the laws of gallantry, madam, this interruption should be death; but as no punishment ought to disturb the triumph of the softer passions, the criminal is pardoned and dismissed. Let us return, madam, to the highest luxury of exalted minds—a declaration of love from the lips of beauty.

Fanny. The entrance of a third person has a little relieved me, but I cannot go through with it; and yet I must open my heart with a discovery, or it will break with its burden. [*Aside.*

Lord Og. What passion in her eyes! I am alarmed to agitation. [*Aside.*]—I presume, madam, (and as you have flattered me, by making me a party

concerned, I hope you'll excuse the presumption) that——

Fanny. Do you excuse my making you a party concerned, my lord, and let me entreat your heart in my behalf, as my future happiness or misery in a great measure depend——

Lord Og. Upon me, madam?

Fanny. Upon you, my lord. [*Sighs.*

Lord Og. There's no standing this: I have caught the infection—her tenderness dissolves me. [*Sighs.*

Fanny, And should you too severely judge of a rash action, which passion prompted, and modesty has long concealed——

Lord Og. [*Taking her hand.*] Thou amiable creature, command my heart, for it is vanquished. Speak but thy virtuous wishes and enjoy them.

Fanny. I cannot, my lord; indeed I cannot. Mr. Lovewell must tell you my distresses; and when you know them, pity and protect me. [*Exit in tears.*

Lord. Og. How the devil could I bring her to this? It is too much—too much—I can't bear it—I must give way to this amiable weakness. [*Wipes his eyes.*] My heart overflows with sympathy, and I feel every tenderness I have inspired. [*Stifles a tear.*] How blind have I been to the desolation I have made! How could I possibly imagine that a little partial attention, and tender civilities to this young creature should have gathered to this burst of passion!—Can I be a man and withstand it? No—I'll sacrifice the whole sex to her. But here comes the father, quite apropos. I'll open the matter immediately, settle the business with him, and take the sweet girl down to Ogleby House to-morrow morning. But what the devil! Miss Sterling too! What mischief's in the wind now?

Enter MR. STERLING, *and* MISS STERLING.

Sterl. My lord, your servant! I am attending my

daughter here upon rather a disagreeable affair.—Speak to his lordship, Betsey.

Lord Og. Your eyes, Miss Sterling, for I always read the eyes of a young lady, betray some little emotion. What are your commands, madam?

Miss Sterl. I have but too much cause for my emotion, my lord!

Lord Og. I cannot commend my kinsman's behaviour, madam. He has behaved like a false knight I must confess. I have heard of his apostacy. Miss Fanny has informed me of it.

Miss Sterl. Miss Fanny's baseness has been the cause of Sir John's inconstancy.

Lord Og. Nay, now, my dear Miss Sterling, your passion transsports you too far. Sir John may have entertained a passion for Miss Fanny, but believe me, my dear Miss Sterling, believe me Miss Fanny has no passion for Sir John. She has a passion, indeed, a most tender passion. She has opened her whole soul to me, and I know where her affections are placed. [*Conceitedly.*

Miss Sterl. Not upon Mr. Lovewell, my lord; for I have great reason to think, that her seeming attachment to him is, by his consent, made use of as a blind to cover her designs upon Sir John.

Lord Og. Lovewell! No, poor lad! She does not think of him. [*Smiling.*

Miss Sterl. Have a care, my lord, that both the families are not made the dupes of Sir John's artifice and my sister's dissimulation! You don't know her; indeed, my lord, you don't know her; a base insinuating, perfidious!—It is too much—She has been before-hand with me, I perceive. Such unnatural behaviour to me! but since I see I can have no redress, I am resolved that some way or other I will have revenge. [*Exit.*

Sterl. This is foolish work, my lord!

Lord Og. I have too much sensibility to bear the tears of beauty.

Sterl. It is touching indeed, my lord; and very moving for a father.

Lord Og. To be sure, sir! You must be distressed beyond measure! Wherefore, to divert your too exquisite feeling, suppose we change the subject and proceed to business.

Sterl. With all my heart, my lord.

Lord Og. You see, Mr. Sterling, we can make no union in our families by the proposed marriage.

Sterl. And I am very sorry to see it, my lord.

Lord Og. Have you set your heart upon being allied to our house, Mr. Sterling?

Sterl. 'Tis my only wish at present, my omnium, as I may call it.

Lord Og. Your wishes shall be fulfilled.

Sterl. Shall they, my lord? but how—how?

Lord Og. I'll marry in your family.

Sterl. What! my sister Heidelberg?

Lord Og. You throw me into a cold sweat, Mr. Sterling. No, not your sister; but your daughter.

Sterl. My daughter!

Lord Og. Fanny! Now the murder's out!

Sterl. What you, my lord!

Lord Og. Yes I, I, Mr. Sterling.

Sterl. No, no, my lord; that's too much. [*Smiling.*

Lord Og. Too much! I don't comprehend you.

Sterl. What you, my lord, marry my Fanny! Bless me! what will the folks say?

Lord Og. Why, what will they say?

Sterl. That you're a bold man, my Lord; that's all.

Lord Og. Mr. Sterling, this may be city wit for aught I know. Do you court my alliance?

Sterl. To be sure, my lord.

Lord Og. Then I'll explain—My nephew won

marry your eldest daughter; nor I either.——Your youngest daughter won't marry him; I will marry your youngest daughter.

Sterl. What! with a youngest daughter's fortune, my lord?

Lord Og. With any fortune, or no fortune at all, sir. Love is the idol of my heart, and the demon Interest sinks before him. So, sir, as I said before, I will marry your youngest daughter; your youngest daughter will marry me.

Sterl. Who told you so, my lord?

Lord Og. Her own sweet self, sir.

Sterl. Indeed!

Lord Og. Yes, sir; our affection is mutual; your advantage double and treble; your daughter will be a countess directly—I shall be the happiest of beings; and you'll be the father to an earl instead of a baronet.

Sterl. But what will my sister say? and my daughter?

Lord Og. I'll manage that matter; nay, if they won't consent, I'll run away with your daughter in spite of you.

Sterl. Well said, my lord! Your spirit's good; I wish you had my constitution; but if you'll venture I have no objection, if my sister has none.

Lord Og. I'll answer for your sister, sir. Apropos; the lawyers are in the house. I'll have articles drawn, and the whole affair concluded to-morrow morning.

Sterl. Very well! and I'll dispatch Lovewell to London immediately for some fresh papers I shall want; and I shall leave you to manage matters with my sister. You must excus me, my lord, but I can't help laughing at the match.—He, he, he! what will the folks say? [*Exit.*

Lord Og. What a fellow am I going to make a father of? He has no more feeling than the post in

his warehouse: but Fanny's virtues tune me to rapture again, and I won't think of the rest of the family.

Enter LOVEWELL, *hastily.*

Lov. I beg your lordship's pardon; are you alone, my lord?

Lord Og. No, my lord, I am not alone; I am in company, the best company.

Lov. My lord!

Lord Og. I never was in such exquisite enchanting company since my heart first conceived, or my senses tasted, pleasure.

Lov. Where are they, my lord? [*Looking about.*

Lord Og. In my mind, sir.

Lov. What company have you there, my lord? [*Smiling.*

Lord Og. My own ideas, sir; which so crowd upon my imagination, and kindle in it such a delirium of ecstasy, that wit, wine, music, poetry, all combined, and each in perfection, are but mere mortal shadows of my felicity.

Lov. I see that your lordship is happy, and I rejoice at it.

Lord Og. You shall rejoice at it, sir; my felicity shall not selfishly be confined, but shall spread its influence to the whole circle of my friends. I need not say, Lovewell, that you shall have your share of it.

Lov. Shall I, my lord?—Then I understand you; you have heard; Miss Fanny has informed you——

Lord Og. She has; I have heard, and she shall be happy; 'tis determined.

Lov. Then I have reached the summit of my wishes. And will your lordship pardon the folly?

Lord Og. O yes; poor creature, how could she help it; 'Twas unavoidable—fate and necessity.

Lov. It was indeed, my lord. Your kindness distracts me.

Lord Og. And so it did the poor girl, faith.

Lov. She trembled to disclose the secret, and declare her affections?

Lord Og. The world, I believe, will not think her affections ill-placed.

Lov. [*Bowing.*] You are too good, my lord.—— And do you really excuse the rashness of the action!

Lord Og. From my very soul, Lovewell.

Lov. [*Bowing.*] I was afraid of her meeting with a cold reception.

Lord Og. More fool you then.

Who pleads her cause with never-failing beauty,
Here finds a full redress. [Strikes his breast.

She's a fine girl, Lovewell.

Lov. Her beauty, my lord, is her least merit. She has an understanding——

Lord Og. Her choice convinces me of that.

Lov. [*Bowing.*] That's your lordship's goodness. Her choice was a disinterested one.

Lord Og. No, no; not altogether; it began with interest, and ended in passion.

Lov. Indeed, my lord, if you were acquainted with her goodness of heart, and generosity of mind, as well as you are with the inferior beauties of her face and person——

Lord Og. I am so perfectly convinced of their existence, and so totally of your mind, touching every amiable particular of that sweet girl, that were it not for the cold, unfeeling impediments of the law, I would marry her to-morrow morning.

Lov. My lord!

Lord Og. I would, by all that's honourable in man, and amiable in woman.

Lov. Marry her!——Who do you mean, my lord?

Lord Og. Miss Fanny Sterling, that is; the Countess of Ogleby that shall be.

Lov. I am astonished

Lord Og. Why, could you expect less from me?

Lov. I did not expect this, my lord.

Lord Og. Trade and accounts have destroyed your feelings.

Lov. No, indeed, my lord. [*Sighs.*

Lord Og. The moment that love and pity entered my breast, I was resolved to plunge into matrimony, and shorten the girl's tortures.—I never do any thing by halves; do I, Lovewell?

Lov. No, indeed, my lord. [*Sighs.*]—What an accident!

Lord Og. What's the matter, Lovewell? thou seem'st to have lost thy faculties. Why don't you wish me joy, man?

Lov. O, I do, my lord. [*Sighs.*

Lord Og. She said that you would explain what she had not power to utter; but I wanted no interpreter for the language of love.

Lov. But has your lordship considered the consequences of your resolution?

Lord Og. No, sir; I am above consideration when my desires are kindled.

Lov. But consider the consequences, my lord, to your nephew, Sir John.

Lord Og. Sir John has considered no consequences himself, Mr. Lovewell.

Lov. Mr. Sterling, my lord, will certainly refuse his daughter to Sir John.

Lord Og. Sir John has already refused Mr. Sterling's daughter.

Lov. But what will become of Miss Sterling, my lord?

Lord Og. What's that to you?——You may have her, if you will. I depend upon Mr. Sterling's city-philosophy to be reconciled to Lord Ogleby's being his son-in-law instead of Sir John Melvil, baronet. Don't you think that your master may be brought

to that, without having recourse to his calculations? Eh, Lovewell?

Lov. But, my lord, that is not the question.

Lord Og. Whatever is the question, I'll tell you my answer.—I am in love with a fine girl, whom I resolve to marry.

Enter SIR JOHN MELVIL.

What news with you, Sir John?—You look all hurry and impatience—like a messenger after a battle.

Sir John. After a battle, indeed, my lord! I have this day had a severe engagement, and wanting your lordship as an auxiliary, I have at last mustered up resolution to declare what my duty to you and to myself have demanded from me some time.

Lord Og. To the business then; and be as concise as possible, for I am upon the wing.—Eh, Lovewell?

[*He smiles, and* LOVEWELL *bows.*

Sir John. I find 'tis in vain, my lord, to struggle against the force of inclination.

Lord Og. Very true, nephew; I am your witness, and will second the motion——Shan't I, Lovewell?

[*Smiles, and* LOVEWELL *bows.*

Sir John. Your lordship's generosity encourages me to tell you, that I cannot marry Miss Sterling.

Lord Og. I am not at all surprised at it—she's a bitter potion, that's the truth of it; but as you were to swallow it, and not I, it was your business, and not mine. Any thing more?

Sir John. But this, my lord; that I may be permitted to make my addresses to the other sister.

Lord Og. O yes; by all means. Have you any hopes there, nephew?—Do you think he'll succeed, Lovewell? [*Smiles, and winks at* LOVEWELL.

Lov. I think not, my lord. [*Gravely.*

Lord Og. I think so too; but let the fool try.

Sir John. Will your lordship favour me with your

good offices to remove the repugnance of Mrs. Heidelberg?

Lord Og. Mrs. Heidelberg!—Had you not better begin with the young lady first? It will save you a great deal of trouble—Won't it, Lovewell? [*Smiles.*] But do what you please, it will be the same thing to me—Won't it, Lovewell? [*Conceitedly.*] Why don't you laugh at him?

Lov. I do, my lord. [*Forces a smile.*

Sir John. And your lordship will endeavour to prevail on Mrs. Heidelberg to consent to my marriage with Miss Fanny?

Lord Og. I'll speak to Mrs. Heidelberg about the adorable Fanny as soon as possible.

Sir John. Your generosity transports me.

Lord Og. Poor fellow, what a dupe! he little thinks who's in possession of the town. [*Aside.*

Sir John. And your lordship is not in the least offended at this seeming inconstancy?

Lord Og. Not in the least. Miss Fanny's charms will even excuse infidelity. I look upon women as the *feræ naturæ*—lawful game—and every man who is qualified, has a natural right to pursue them;—Lovewell as well as you, and I as well as either of you—Every man shall do his best, without offence to any—What say you, kinsmen?

Sir John. You have made me happy, my lord.

Lov. And me, I assure you, my lord.

Lord Og. And I am superlatively so—*allons donc!* To horse and away, boys!—you to your affairs, and I to mine——*suivons l'amour.* [*Sings.*

[*Exeunt severally.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

FANNY'S *Apartment.*

Enter LOVEWELL *and* FANNY, *followed by* BETTY.

Fanny. Why did you come so soon, Mr. Lovewell? the family is not yet in bed, and Betty certainly heard somebody listening near the chamber-door.

Betty. My mistress is right, sir; evil spirits are abroad; and I am sure you are both too good, not to expect mischief from them.

Lov. But who can be so curious, or so wicked?

Betty. I think we have wickedness and curiosity enough in this family, sir, to expect the worst.

Fanny. I do expect the worst.——Pr'ythee, Betty, return to the outward door, and listen if you hear any body in the gallery; and let us know directly.

Betty. I warrant you, madam—The Lord bless you both! [*Exit.*

Fanny. What did my father want with you this evening?

Lov. He gave me the key of his closet, with orders to bring from London some papers relating to Lord Ogleby.

Fanny. And why did you not obey him?

Lov. Because I am certain that his lordship has opened his heart to him about you, and those papers are wanted merely on that account; but as we shall discover all to-morrow, there will be no occasion for them, and it would be idle in me to go.

Fanny. Hark!—hark! Bless me, how I tremble! ——I feel the terrors of guilt——Indeed, Mr. Lovewell, this is too much for me.

Lov. And for me too, my sweet Fanny. Your apprehensions make a coward of me.—But what can alarm you? your aunt and sister are in their chambers, and you have nothing to fear from the rest of the family.

Fanny. I fear every body, and every thing, and every moment——My mind is in continual agitation and dread; indeed, Mr. Lovewell, this situation may have very unhappy consequences. [*Weeps.*

Lov. But it sha'n't—I would rather tell our story this moment to all the house, and run the risk of maintaining you by the hardest labour, than suffer you to remain in this dangerous perplexity.

Fanny. Hush! hush! for heaven's sake, my dear Lovewell, don't be so warm; your generosity gets the better of your prudence; you will be heard, and we shall be discovered.——I am satisfied—indeed I am——Excuse this weakness, this delicacy, this what you will.——My mind's at peace—indeed it is —think no more of it, if you love me!

Lov. That one word has charmed me, as it always does to the most implicit obedience: it would be the worst of ingratitude in me to distress you a moment. [*Kisses her.*

Enter BETTY.

Betty. [*In a low voice.*] I'm sorry to disturb you.

Fanny. Ha! what's the matter?

Lov. Have you heard any body?

Betty. Yes, yes, I have; and they have heard you too, or I'm mistaken—if they had seen you too, we should have been in a fine quandary!

Fanny. Pr'ythee, don't prate now, Betty!

Lov. What did you hear?

Betty. I was preparing myself, as usual, to take me a little nap——

Lov. A nap!

Betty. Yes, sir, a nap; for I watch much better so than wide awake; and when I had wrapped this handkerchief round my head, for fear of the ear-ache from the key-hole, I thought I heard a kind of a sort of a buzzing, which I first took for a gnat, and shook my head two or three times, and went so with my hand.

Fanny. Well—well—and so——

Betty. And so, madam, when I heard Mr. Lovewell a little loud, I heard the buzzing louder too—— and pulling off my handkerchief softly, I could hear this sort of noise——

[*Makes an indistinct sort of noise, like speaking.*

Fanny. Well, and what did they say?

Betty. O! I could not understand a word of what was said.

Fanny. What shall we do?

Lov. Fear nothing; Betty's in the conspiracy, and can make a man a mouse at any time.

Betty. I can distinguish a man from a mouse as well as my betters——I'm sorry you think so ill of me, sir.

Fanny. He compliments you; don't be a fool!—Now you have set her tongue a running, she'll mutter for an hour. [*To* LOVEWELL.] I'll go and hearken myself. [*Exit.*

Betty. I'll turn my back upon no girl for sincerity and service. [*Half aside, and muttering.*

Lov. Thou art the first in the world for both; and I will reward you soon, Betty, for one and the other.

Betty. I am not mercenary neither—I can live on a little, with a good character.

Enter FANNY.

Fanny. All seems quiet—Suppose, my dear, you go to your own room—I shall be much easier then; and to-morrow we will be prepared for the discovery.

Betty. You may discover, if you please; but for my part, I shall still be secret.

[*Half aside, and muttering.*

Lov. Should I leave you now, if they still are upon the watch, we shall lose the advantage of our delay. Besides, we should consult upon to-morrow's business. Let Betty go to her own room, and lock the outward door after her; we can fasten this; and when she thinks all safe, she may return and let me out as usual.

Betty. Shall I, madam?

Fanny. Do let me have my way to-night, and you shall command me ever after.

Lov. I live only to oblige you, my sweet Fanny! I'll begone this moment. [*Going.*

Fanny. Let us listen first at the door, that you may not be intercepted. Betty shall go first, and if they lay hold of her——

Betty. They'll have the wrong sow by the ear, I can tell them that. [*Going hastily.*

Fanny. Softly—softly—Betty! don't venture out, if you hear a noise. Softly, I beg of you!—See, Mr. Lovewell, the effects of indiscretion!

Lov. But love, Fanny, makes amends for all.

[*Exeunt softly*

SCENE II.

A Gallery, which leads to several Bed-chambers.

Enter MISS STERLING, *leading* MRS. HEIDELBERG *in a Night-cap.*

Miss Sterl. This way, dear madam, and then I'll tell you all.

Mrs. Heidel. Nay, but, niece—consider a little—don't drag me out this figure; let me put on my fly-cap:—if any of my lord's fammaly, or the counsellors at law should be stirring, I should be perdigus disconcerted.

Miss Sterl. But, my dear madam, a moment is an age, in my situation. I am sure my sister has been plotting my disgrace and ruin in that chamber——. O! she's all craft and wickedness.

Mrs. Heidel. Well, but softly, Betsey!—you are all in emotion—your mind is too much flustrated—you can neither eat, nor drink, nor take your natural rest. Compose yourself, child; for if we are not as warysome as they are wicked, we shall disgrace ourselves and the whole fammaly.

Miss Sterl. We are disgraced already, madam. Sir John Melvil has forsaken me; my lord cares for nobody but himself; or if any body, it is my sister; my father, for the sake of a better bargain, would marry me to a 'Change broker;—I had better—at once—give up the matter—and let my sister enjoy—the fruits of her treachery—trample with scorn upon the rights of her eldest sister—the will of the best of aunts—and the weakness of a too interested father.

[*She pretends to be bursting into tears during this speech.*

Mrs. Heidel. Don't, Betsey—keep up your spurrit—I hate whimpering—I am your friend—depend upon me in every particular.—But be composed, and tell me what new mischief you have discovered.

Miss Sterl. I had no desire to sleep, and would not undress myself, knowing that my Machiaval sister would not rest till she had broke my heart:—I was so uneasy that I could not stay in my room, but when I thought that all the house was quiet, I sent my maid to discover what was going forward;—she immediately came back and told me, that they were in high consultation; that she had heard only, for it was in the dark, my sister's maid conduct Sir John Melvil to her mistress, and then lock the door.

Mrs. Heidel. And how did you conduct yourself in this dalimma?

Miss Sterl. I returned with her, and could hear a man's voice, though nothing that they said distinctly; and you may depend upon it, that Sir John is now in that room, that they have settled the matter, and will run away together before morning, if we don't prevent them.

Mrs. Heidel: Why, the brazen slut! she has got her sister's husband (that is to be) locked up in her chamber! at night too!—I tremble at the thoughts!

Miss Sterl. Hush, madam! I hear something!

Mrs. Heidel. You frighten me—Let me put on my fly-cap—I would not be seen in this figur for the world.

Miss Sterl. 'Tis dark, madam; you can't be seen.

Mrs. Heidel. I protest there's a candle coming, and a man too!

Miss Sterl. Nothing but servants;—let us retire a moment. [*They retire.*

Enter BRUSH, *half drunk, laying hold of the* CHAMBER-MAID, *who has a candle in her hand.*

Cham. Be quiet, Mr. Brush; I shall drop down with terror!

Brush. But, my sweet, and most amiable chamber-maid, if you have no love, you may hearken to a little reason! that cannot possibly do your virtue any harm.

Cham. But you may do me harm, Mr. Brush, and a great deal of harm, too;—Pray let me go; I am ruined if they hear you; I tremble like an asp.

Brush. But they sha'n't hear us; and if you have a mind to be ruined, it shall be the making of your fortune, you little slut, you! therefore, I say it again, if you have no love, bear a little reason.

Cham. I wonder at your impurence, Mr. Brush, to use me in this manner; this is not the way to keep me company, I assure you. You are a town rake, I see, and now you are a little in liquor, you fear nothing.

Brush. Nothing, by heavens, but your frowns, most amiable chamber-maid! I am a little electrified, that's the truth on't; I am not used to drink Port, and your master's is so heady, that a pint of it oversets a claret drinker. Come now, my dear.

Cham. Don't be rude! bless me!—I shall be ruined—what will become of me?

Brush. I'll take care of you, by all that's honourable.

Cham. You are a base man to use me so—I'll cry out, if you don't let me go. That is Miss Sterling's chamber, that Miss Fanny's, and that Madam Heidelberg's.

Brush. And that Lord Ogleby's, and, that my Lady what-d'ye-call-'em: I don't mind such folks when I'm sober, much less when I am whimsical—rather above that too.

Cham. More shame for you, Mr. Brush!—you terrify me—you have no modesty.

Brush. O, but I have, my sweet spider-brusher!—for instance; I reverence Miss Fanny—she's a most delicious morsel, and fit for a prince.——With all my horrors of matrimony, I could marry her myself—but for her sister——.

Miss Sterl. There, there, madam, all in a story!

Cham. Bless me, Mr. Brush!—I heard something!

Brush. Rats, I suppose, that are gnawing the old timbers of this execrable old dungeon.—If it was mine, I would pull it down, and fill your fine canal up with the rubbish; and then I should get rid of two damn'd things at once.

Cham. Law! law! how you blaspheme!—we shall have the house upon our heads for it.

Brush. No, no, it will last our time: but, as I was saying, the eldest sister——Miss Jezebel——

Cham. Is a fine young lady, for all your evil tongue.

Brush. No——we have smoked her already; and unless she marries our old Swiss, she can have none of us——No, no, she won't do—we are a little too nice.

Cham. You're a monstrous rake, Mr. Brush, and don't care what you say.

Brush. Why, for that matter, my dear, I am a little inclined to mischief; and if you don't have pity upon me, I will break open that door, and ravish Mrs. Heidelberg.

Mrs. Heidel. [*Coming forward.*] There's no bearing this—You profligate monster!

Cham. Ha! I am undone!

Brush. Zounds! here she is, by all that's monstrous! [*Runs off.*

Miss Sterl. A fine discourse you have had with that fellow!

Mrs. Heidel. And a fine time of night it is to be here with that drunken monster!

Miss Sterl. What have you to say for yourself?

Cham. I can say nothing.—I'm so frightened, and so ashamed—but indeed I am vartuous—I am vartuous, indeed.

Mrs. Heidel. Well, well—don't tremble so; but, tell us what you know of this horrable plot here.

Miss Sterl. We'll forgive you, if you'll discover all.

Cham. Why, madam—don't let me betray my fellow servants—I sha'n't sleep in my bed, if I do.

Mrs. Heidel. Then you shall sleep somewhere else to-morrow night.

Cham. O dear! what shall I do?

Mrs. Heidel. Tell us this moment, or I'll turn you out of doors directly.

Cham. Why, our butler has been treating us below in his pantry—Mr. Brush forced us to make a kind of a holiday night of it.

Miss Sterl. Holiday! for what?

Cham. Nay, I only made one.

Miss Sterl. Well, well; but upon what account?

Cham. Because, as how, madam, there was a change in the family, they said——that his honour, Sir John, was to marry Miss Fanny instead of your ladyship.

Miss Sterl. And so you make a holiday for that—Very fine!

Cham. I did not make it, ma'am.

Mrs. Heidel. But do you know nothing of Sir John's being to run away with Miss Fanny to-night?

Cham. No, indeed, ma'am!

Miss Sterl. Nor of his being now locked up in my sister's chamber?

Cham. No, as I hope for marcy, ma'am.

Mrs. Heidel. Well, I'll put an end to all this directly—Do you run to my brother Sterling——

Cham. Now, ma'am!—'Tis so very late, ma'am—

Mrs. Heidel. I don't care how late it is Tell him

there are thieves in the house—that the house is on fire—tell him to come here immediately—go, I say.

Cham. I will, I will, though I'm frighten'd out of my wits. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Heidel. Do you watch here, my dear; and I'll put myself in order to face them. We'll plot 'em, and counter-plot 'em too.

[*Exit into her chamber.*

Miss Sterl. I have as much pleasure in this revenge as in being made a countess.—Ha! they are unlocking the door.—Now for it! [*Retires.*

FANNY'S *door is unlocked, and* BETTY *comes out;* MISS STERLING *approaches her.*

Betty. [*Calling within.*] Sir! sir!—now's your time—all's clear. [*Seeing* MISS STERL.] Stay, stay—yet—we are watch'd.

Miss Sterl. And so you are, Madam Betty. [MISS STERLING *lays hold of her, while* BETTY *locks the door, and puts the key into her pocket.*

Betty. [*Turning round.*] What's the matter, madam?

Miss Sterl. Nay, that you shall tell my father and aunt, madam.

Betty. I am no tell-tale, madam, and no thief; they'll get nothing from me.

Miss. Sterl. You have a great deal of courage, Betty; and considering the secrets you have to keep, you have occasion for it.

Betty. My mistress shall never repent her good opinion of me, ma'am.

Enter MR. STERLING.

Sterl. What's all this? What's the matter? Why am I disturbed in this manner?

Miss Sterl. This creature, and my distresses, sir, will explain the matter.

Re-enter MRS. HEIDELBERG *with another head-dress.*

Mrs. Heidel. Now I'm prepared for the rancounter. ——Well, brother, have you heard of this scene of wickedness?

Sterl. Not I—but what is it? speak.——I was got into my little closet, all the lawyers were in bed, and I had almost lost my senses in the confusion of Lord Ogleby's mortgages, when I was alarmed with a foolish girl, who could hardly speak; and whether its fire, or thieves, or murder, or a rape, I'm quite in the dark.

Mrs. Heidel. No, no, there's no rape, brother!—all parties are willing, I believe.

Miss Sterl. Who's in that chamber?

[*Detaining* BETTY, *who seemed to be stealing away.*

Betty. My mistress.

Miss Sterl. And who's with your mistress?

Betty. Why, who should there be?

Miss Sterl. Open the door then, and let us see.

Betty. The door is open, madam.—[MISS STERLING *goes to the door.*]—I'll sooner die than peach.

[*Exit hastily.*

Miss Sterl. The door is lock'd; and she has got the key in her pocket.

Mrs. Heidel. There's impudence, brother! piping-hot from your daughter Fanny's school!

Sterl. But, zounds! what is all this about? You tell me of a sum total, and you don't produce the particulars.

Mrs. Heidel. Sir John Melvil is locked up in your daughter's bed-chamber—There is the particular.

Sterl. The devil he is!—That's bad.

Miss Sterl. And he has been there some time too.

Sterl. Ditto.

Mrs. Heidel. Ditto! worse and worse, I say. I'll

raise the house, and expose him to my lord, and the whole fammaly.

Sterl. By no means! we shall expose ourselves, sister!—the best way is to ensure privately—let me alone! I'll make him marry her to-morrow morning.

Miss Sterl. Make him marry her! this is beyond all patience!—You have thrown away all your affection, and I shall do as much by my obedience; unnatural fathers make unnatural children. My revenge is in my own power, and I'll indulge it. Had they made their escape, I should have been exposed to the derision of the world; but the deriders shall be derided; and so—Help! help, there!—Thieves! thieves!

Mrs. Heidel. Tit-for-tat, Betsey! you are right, my girl.

Sterl. Zounds! you'll spoil all—you'll raise the whole family——the devil's in the girl.

Mrs. Heidel. No, no; the devil's in you, brother: I am ashamed of your principles.—What! would you connive at your daughter's being locked up with her sister's husband? Help! Thieves! thieves! I say! [*Cries out.*

Sterl. Sister, I beg you!—Daughter, I command you!—If you have no regard for me, consider yourselves!—we shall lose this opportunity of ennobling our blood, and getting above twenty per cent. for our money

Miss Sterl. What, by my disgrace and my sister's triumph! I have a spirit above such mean considerations: and to show you that it is not a low-bred, vulgar Change Alley spirit——Help! help! Thieves! thieves, I say!

Sterl. Ay, ay, you may save your lungs—the house is in an uproar.

Enter CANTON *in a Night-gown and Slippers.*

Can. Eh, diable! vat is de raison of dis great noise, dis tintamarre?

Sterl. Ask those ladies, sir; 'tis of their making.

Lord Og. [*Calls within.*] Brush!—Brush!—Canton!—Where are you?—What's the matter! [*Rings a bell.*] Where are you?

Sterl. 'Tis my lord calls, Mr. Canton.

Can. I com, mi lor!—— [*Exit.* CANTON.

[LORD OGLEBY *still sings.*

Serg. Flow. [*Calls within.*] A light! a light here!—Where are the servants? Bring a light for me and my brothers.

Sterl. Lights here! lights for the gentlemen!

Enter SERGEANT FLOWER, *with one Boot and a Slipper, and* TRAVERSE.

Sterl. This way, sir! this way, gentlemen!

Flow. Well; but, Mr. Sterling, no danger I hope. Have they made a burglarious entry? Are you prepared to repulse them? I am very much alarmed about thieves at circuit time. They would be particularly severe with us gentlemen of the bar.

Trav. No danger, Mr. Sterling, no trespass, I hope!

Sterl. None, gentlemen, but of those ladies' making.

Mrs. Heidel. You'll be ashamed to know, gentlemen, that all your labours and studies about this young lady are thrown away—Sir John Melvil is at this moment locked up with this lady's younger sister.

Flow. The thing is a little extraordinary to be sure; but why were we to be frighten'd out of our beds for this? Could not we have tried this cause to-morrow morning?

Miss Sterl. But, sir, by to-morrow morning, perhaps, even your assistance would not have been of any service—the birds now in that cage would have flown away.

Enter LORD OGLEBY *in his Robe-de-Chambre, Night-cap, &c. leaning on* CANTON.

Lord Og. I had rather lose a limb than my night's rest.—What's the matter with you all?

Sterl. Ay, ay, its all over!—Here's my lord too.

Lord Og. What's all this shrieking and screaming? Where's my angelic Fanny? She's safe, I hope?

Mrs. Heidel. Your angelic Fanny, my lord, is lock'd up with your angelic nephew in that chamber.

Lord Og. My nephew! Then will I be excommunicated.

Mrs. Heidel. Your nephew, my lord, has been plotting to run away with Miss Fanny, and Miss Fanny has been plotting to run away with your nephew: and if we had not watched them, and called up the fammaly, they had been upon the scamper to Scotland by this time.

Lord Og. Lookye, ladies! I know that Sir John has conceived a violent passion for Miss Fanny; and I know too, that Miss Fanny has conceived a violent passion for another person; and I am so well convinced of the rectitude of her affections, that I will support them with my fortune, my honour, and my life.——Eh, sha'n't I, Mr. Sterling? [*Smiling.*] What say you?

Sterl. [*Sulkily.*] To be sure, my lord.——These bawling women have been the ruin of every thing. [*Aside.*

Lord Og. But come, I'll end this business in a trice.—If you, ladies, will compose yourselves, and

Mr. Sterling will ensure Miss Fanny from violence, I will engage to draw her from her pillow with a whisper through the key-hole.

Mrs. Heidel. The horrid creatures!—I say, my lord, break the door open.

Lord Og. Let me beg of your delicacy not to be too precipitate! Now to our experiment!

[*Advancing towards the door.*

Miss Sterl. Now, what will they do? my heart will beat through my bosom

Enter BETTY *with a Key.*

Betty. There's no occasion for breaking open doors, my lord: we have done nothing that we ought to be ashamed of, and my mistress shall face her enemies. [*Going to unlock the door.*

Mrs. Heidel. There's impudence.

Lord Og. The mystery thickens. Lady of the bed-chamber, [*To* BETTY.] open the door, and entreat Sir John Melvil (for the ladies will have it that he is there) to appear and answer to high crimes and misdemeanors.—Call Sir John Melvil into the court.

Enter SIR JOHN MELVIL *on the other side.*

Sir John. I am here, my lord.

Mrs. Heidel. Heyday!

Miss Sterl. Astonishment!

Sir John. What's all this alarm and confusion? There is nothing but hurry in this house: what is the reason of it.

Lord Og. Because you have been in that chamber: have been! nay, you are there at this moment, as these ladies have protested, so don't deny it. Upon my word, ladies, if you have often these frolics it would be really entertaining to pass a whole summer with you.—But come, [*To* BETTY.] open

the door, and entreat your amiable mistress to come forth, and dispel all our doubts with her smiles.

Betty. [*Opening the door.*] Madam, you are wanted in this room. [*Pertly.*

Enter FANNY *in great confusion.*

Miss Sterl. You see she's ready dressed——

Mrs. Heidel. Ready to pack off, bag and baggage! Her guilt confounds her!

Fanny. I am confounded, indeed, madam!

Lord Og. Don't droop, my beauteous lily! but with your own peculiar modesty declare your state of mind. Pour conviction into their ears, and rapture into mine. [*Smiling.*

Fanny. I am at this moment the most unhappy—most distressed—the tumult is too much for my heart—and I want the power to reveal a secret which, to conceal, has been the misfortune and misery of my—— [*Faints away.*

LOVEWELL *rushes out of the Chamber.*

Lov. My Fanny in danger! I can contain no longer. Prudence were now a crime; all other cares were lost in this! Speak, speak, speak to me, my dearest Fanny! Let me but hear thy voice; open your eyes, and bless me with the smallest sign of life. [*During this speech they are all in Amazement.*

Miss Sterl. Lovewell!—I am easy.

Mrs. Heidel. I am thunderstruck!

Lord Og. I am petrified!

Sir John. And I undone!

Fanny. [*Recovering*] O, Lovewell! even supported by thee, I dare not look my father nor his lordship in the face.

Sterl. What now? Did not I send you to London, sir?

Lord Og. Eh!—What! How's this! By what right and title have you been half the night in that lady's bed-chamber?

Lov. By that right which makes me the happiest of men! and by a title which I would not forego for any the best of kings could give.

Betty. I could cry my eyes out to hear his magnimity. [*Exit* BETTY.

Lord Og. I am annihilated!

Sterl. I have been choked with rage and wonder; but now I can speak.—Lovewell, you are a villain. —You have broke your word with me.

Fanny. Indeed, sir, he has not; you forbade him to think of me when it was out of his power to obey you—we have been married these four months.

Sterl. And he sha'n't stay in my house four hours. What baseness and treachery!—As for you, you shall repent this step as long as you live, madam.

Fanny. Indeed, sir, it is impossible to conceive the tortures I have already endured in consequence of my disobedience. My heart has continually upbraided me for it; and though I was too weak to struggle with affection, I feel that I must be miserable for ever without your forgiveness.

Sterl. Lovewell, you shall leave my house directly; and you shall follow him, madam.

Lord Og. And if they do, I will receive them into mine. Lookye, Mr. Sterling, there have been some mistakes, which we had all better forget for our own sakes; and the best way to forget them is to forgive the cause of them; which I do from my soul—Poor girl! I swore to support her affection with my life and fortune; 'its a debt of honour, and must be paid——You swore as much too, Mr. Sterling, but your laws in the city will excuse you, I suppose: for you never strike a balance without errors excepted.

Sterl. I am a father, my lord; but for the sake of

all other fathers, I think I ought not to forgive her, for fear of encouraging other silly girls like herself to throw themselves away without the consent of their parents.

Lov. I hope there will be no danger of that, sir. Young ladies, with minds like my Fanny's, would startle at the very shadow of vice; and when they know to what uneasiness only an indiscretion has exposed her, her example, instead of encouraging, will rather serve to deter them.

Mrs. Heidel. Indiscretion, quotha! a mighty pretty, delicat word to express disobedience!

Lord Og. For my part, I indulge my own passions too much to tyrannize over those of other people. Poor souls, I pity them. And you must forgive them too. Come, come, melt a little of your flint, Mr. Sterling!

Sterl. Why, why, as to that, my lord—to be sure, he is a relation of yours, my lord——What say you, sister Heidelberg?

Mrs. Heidel. The girl's ruin'd, and I forgive her.

Sterl. Well—so do I then.—Nay, no thanks—[*To* LOVEWELL *and* FANNY, *who seem preparing to speak.*] there's an end of the matter.

Lord Og. But, Lovewell, what makes you dumb all this while?

Lov. Your kindness, my lord——I can scarce believe my own senses—they are all in a tumult of fear, joy, love, expectation, and gratitude; I ever was, and am now more bound in duty to your lordship.—For you, Mr. Sterling, if every moment of my life spent gratefully in your service will, in some measure, compensate the want of fortune, you perhaps will not repent your goodness to me.—And you, ladies, I flatter myself will not for the future suspect me of artifice and intrigue. I shall be happy to oblige and serve you.—As for you, Sir John——

Sir John. No apologies to me, Lovewell; I do not

deserve any. All I have to offer in excuse for what has happened, is my total ignorance of your situation. Had you dealt a little more openly with me, you would have saved me, yourself, and that lady, (who I hope, will pardon my behaviour) a great deal of uneasiness. Give me leave, however, to assure you, that light and capricious as I may have appeared, now my infatuation is over, I have sensibility enough to be ashamed of the part I have acted, and honour enough to rejoice at your happiness.

Lov. And now, my dearest Fanny, though we are seemingly the happiest of beings, yet all our joys will be damped, if his lordship's generosity and Mr. Sterling's forgiveness, should not be succeeded by the indulgence, approbation, and consent of these our best benefactors. [*To the audience.*

THE END.

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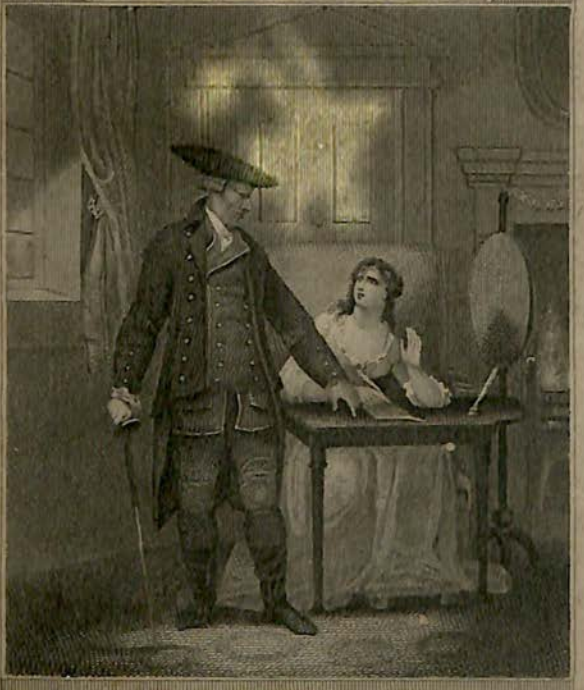

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ACT V. SCENE I.

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IN TWENTY-FIVE VOLUMES.

VOL. XVI.

COUNTRY GIRL.
JEALOUS WIFE.
CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE.
COUNTESS OF SALISBURY.
DOUGLAS.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES AND ORME,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

1808.

WILLIAM SAVAGE, PRI''TER,
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THE

COUNTRY GIRL;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, DRURY LANE.

ALTERED FROM WYCHERLY'S COUNTRY WIFE.

By DAVID GARRICK, Esq.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT-BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by James Ballantyne & Co.

REMARKS.

The author of this comedy possessed a mind which delighted every man, and a person which charmed every woman.

Wycherly lived in the cheerful days of Charles the Second; was the companion of the wits of that period, caressed by his sovereign, and, it is said, beloved by his sovereign's mistress, the beautiful Duchess of Cleveland.

As a wife has too often the power to make her husband conceive a friendship for the very man who is the means of his disgrace, such surely may be the power of a mistress; and the singular partiality which his majesty shewed for the author of this play, might possibly be derived from the same artful source which supplies treachery to the marriage state—though, in the present case, followed by less fatal consequences.

In the course of a dangerous illness, which for some time threatened Wycherly's life, the king even condescended to visit him at his lodgings in Bow-street, and was graciously pleased to present him with a large sum of money, in order to travel to the south of France for the recovery of his health. On his return to England, the monarch conferred on him a still higher degree of honour than he had yet done, by entrusting to his care the tuition of a favourite

son, and allowing him a pension of fifteen hundred a year for his guardianship.

The present comedy was greatly admired by the court, and warmly received by the town; which will give the reader no surprise, as its fable, incidents, and dialogue, are all perfectly dramatic, and worthy of high admiration.—Yet to one who has seen this play acted of late years, it must appear wonderful how it could ever be performed successfully without Mrs Jordan.

Mrs Jordan made her first appearance on the London stage in the character of Peggy. She came with no report in her favour to elevate her above a very moderate salary; or to attract more than a very moderate house when she appeared. But here moderation stopped. She at once displayed such consummate art, with such bewitching nature—such excellent sense, and such innocent simplicity, that her auditors were boundless in their plaudits, and so warm in her praises when they left the theatre, that their friends at home would not give credit to the extent of their eulogiums.

It is unnecessary to tell the present generation, that not a syllable that was spoken in Mrs Jordan's commendation in this character was extravagant.

Amongst the external gifts which inspire endearing sensations from one human being to another, the most fascinating is, perhaps, a melodious voice —not the vocal music of singing, but of speaking. Mrs Jordan has this gift beyond any woman who speaks in public. As a proof, her pronunciation is imperfect; for most of her words are uttered with

a kind of provincial dialect; yet her tones are enchanting as the softest harmony—"a concord of sweet sounds."

"The Country Girl" was originally called "The Country Wife;" and received its new title from Mr Garrick, who revived the comedy, when he was manager of Drury Lane, and expunged those parts of it, which probably were thought the most entertaining in the age when it was written, but which an improved taste delicately rejects. The comedy, in its present state, boasts the witty dialogue of former times, blended with the purity and happy incident of modern dramas.

As the catastrophe of all comedies is marriage, marriage was likewise the catastrophe of poor Wycherly's own comic scenes; for he married, and the rest of his life was a deep tragedy. He married the Countess of Drogheda, who was young, rich, and beautiful; but who had not domestic virtues to reward him for the loss of his sovereign's favour, which immediately followed their union. It is said, the king resented the author's not having solicited his consent to the nuptials; but other causes were more likely to have effected his disgrace at court. The slighted Cleveland might be his enemy; or, as Charles the Second was a social spirit, perhaps, like Sparkish in this play, he—"could not love a woman, whom other men did not love."—And his majesty might require Wycherly's passion for the Duchess to incite his own; as companions, by seeing others drink, are merrily led to the joys of intoxication.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MOODY	*Mr Wroughton.*
HARCOURT	*Mr Barrymore.*
SPARKISH	*Mr Russel.*
BELVILLE	*Mr Holland.*
WILLIAM	*Mr Maddocks.*
ROBIN	*Mr Purser.*
MISS PEGGY	*Mrs Jordan.*
ALITHEA	*Miss Mellon.*
LUCY	*Mrs Scott.*

SCENE,—London.

THE

COUNTRY GIRL.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

HARCOURT'S *Lodgings.*

HARCOURT *and* BELVILLE *discovered sitting.*

Harc. Ha, ha, ha! and so you are in love, nephew, not reasonably and gallantly, as a young gentleman ought, but sighingly, miserably so—not content to be ankle deep, you have soused over head and ears—ha, Dick?

Belv. I am pretty much in that condition, indeed, uncle. [*Sighs.*

Harc. Nay, never blush at it—when I was of your age I was ashamed too—but three years at college, and half a one at Paris, methinks should have cured you of that unfashionable weakness—modesty.

Belv. Could I have released myself from that, I had, perhaps, been at this instant happy in the possession of what I must despair now ever to obtain—Heigho!

Harc. Ha, ha, ha! very foolish indeed.

Belv. Don't laugh at me, uncle; I am foolish, I know; but, like other fools, I deserve to be pitied.

Harc. Pr'ythee don't talk of pity; how can I help you?——for this Country Girl of yours is certainly married.

Belv. No, no—I won't believe it; she is not married, nor she sha'n't, if I can help it.

Harc. Well said, modesty.—With such a spirit, you can help yourself, Dick, without my assistance.

Belv. But you must encourage, and advise me too, or I shall never make any thing of it.

Harc. Provided the girl is not married; for I never, never encourage young men to covet their neighbours' wives.

Belv. My heart assures me that she is not married.

Harc. O, to be sure, your heart is much to be relied upon—but, to convince you that I have a fellow-feeling of your distress, and that I am as nearly allied to you in misfortunes as in relationship, you must know——

Belv. What, uncle? you alarm me.

Harc. That I am in love too.

Belv. Indeed!

Harc. Miserably in love.

Belv. That's charming.

Harc. And my mistress is just going to be married to another.

Belv. Better and better.

Harc. I knew my fellow-sufferings would please you; but now prepare for the wonderful wonder of wonders!

Belv. Well!

Harc. My mistress is in the same house with yours.

Belv. What, are you in love with Peggy too?

[*Rising from his Chair.*

Harc. Well said, jealousy—No, no, set your heart at rest.—Your Peggy is too young and too simple for me.—I must have one a little more knowing, a little better bred, just of enough to see the difference be-

tween me and a coxcomb, spirit enough to break from a brother's engagements, and chuse for herself.

Belv. You don't mean Alithea, who is to be married to Mr Sparkish?

Harc. Can't I be in love with a lady that is going to be married to another, as well as you, sir?

Belv. But Sparkish is your friend!

Harc. Pr'ythee don't call him my friend; he can be nobody's friend, not even his own—He would thrust himself into my acquaintance, would introduce me to his mistress, though I have told him again and again that I was in love with her, which, instead of ridding me of him, has made him only ten times more troublesome—and me really in love—He should suffer for his self-sufficiency.

Belv. 'Tis a conceited puppy!—And what success with the lady?

Harc. No great hopes—and yet, if I could defer the marriage a few days, I should not despair;—her honour, I am confident, is her only attachment to my rival—she can't like Sparkish, and if I can work upon his credulity, I may yet have the chance of throwing sixes upon the dice to save me.

Belv. Nothing can save me.

Harc. No, not if you whine and sigh, when you should be exerting every thing that is man about you. I have sent Sparkish, who is admitted at all hours in the house, to know how the land lies for you, and if she is not married already.

Belv. How cruel you are—you raise me up with one hand, and then knock me down with the other!

Harc. Well, well, she sha'n't be married. [*Knocking at the Door.*] This is Sparkish, I suppose: don't drop the least hint of your passion to him; if you do, you may as well advertise it in the public papers.

Belv. I'll be careful.

Enter WILLIAM.

Will. An odd sort of a person, from the country I believe, who calls himself Moody, wants to see you, sir; but as I did not know him, I said you were not at home, but would return directly; "And so will I too," said he, very short and surly; and away he went, mumbling to himself.

Harc. Very well, Will—I'll see him when he comes. [*Exit* WILLIAM.] Moody call to see me!—He has something more in his head than making me a visit—'tis to complain of you, I suppose.

Belv. How can he know me?

Harc. We must suppose the worst, and be prepared for him.—Tell me all you know of this ward of his, this Peggy—Peggy what's her name?

Belv. Thrift, Thrift, uncle.

Harc. Ay, ay, Sir Thomas Thrift's daughter, of Hampshire, and left very young under the guardianship of my old acquaintance and companion, Jack Moody.

Belv. Your companion! he's old enough to be your father.

Harc. Thank you, nephew; he has greatly the advantage of me in years, as well as wisdom. When I first launched from the university into this ocean of London, he was the greatest rake in it; I knew him well for near two years, but all of a sudden he took a freak (a very prudent one) of retiring wholly into the country.

Belv. There he gained such an ascendency over the odd disposition of his neighbour, Sir Thomas, that he left him sole guardian to his daughter, who forfeits half her fortune if she does not marry with his consent—there's the devil, uncle.

Harc. And are you so young, so foolish, and so much in love, that you would take her with half her value? ha, nephew?

Belv. I'll take her with any thing—with nothing.

Harc. What! such an unaccomplished, awkward, silly creature; he has scarce taught her to write; she has seen nobody to converse with, but the country people about them; so she can do nothing but dangle her arms, look gawky, turn her toes in, and talk broad Hampshire.

Belv. Don't abuse her sweet simplicity—had you but heard her talk, as I have done, from the garden wall in the country, by moonlight——

Harc. Romeo and Juliet, I protest, ha, ha, ha! "Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious"——ha, ha, ha! How often have you seen this fair Capulet?

Belv. I saw her three times in the country, and spoke to her twice; I have leapt an orchard wall, like Romeo, to come at her, played the balcony scene from an old summer-house in the garden; and, if I lose her, I will find out an apothecary, and play the tomb scene too.

Harc. Well said, Dick!—this spirit must produce something.—But has the old dragon ever caught you sighing at her?

Belv. Never in the country; he saw me yesterday kissing my hand to her from the new tavern window, that looks upon the back of his house, and immediately drove her from it, and fastened up the window-shutters.

Spark. [*Without.*] Very well, Will, I'll go up to them.

Harc. I hear Sparkish coming up—take care of what I told you—not a word of Peggy;—hear his intelligence, and make use of it, without seeming to mind it.

Belv. Mum, mum, uncle.

Enter SPARKISH.

Spark. O, my dear Harcourt, I shall die with laughing—I have such news for thee—ha, ha, ha!—What, your nephew too, and a little dumpish, or so—

you have been giving him a lecture upon economy I suppose—you, who never had any, can best describe the evils that arise from the want of it.—I never mind my own affairs, not I—"The gods take care of Cato."—I hear, Mr Belville, you have got a pretty snug house, with a bow-window that looks into the Park, and a back-door that goes out into it.—Very convenient, and well imagined—no young handsome fellow should be without one—you may be always ready there, like a spider in his web, to seize upon strayed women of quality.

Harc. As you used to do—you vain fellow you; pr'ythee don't teach my nephew your abandoned tricks—he is a modest young man, and you must not spoil him.

Spark. May be so;—but his modesty has done some mischief at our house—my surly, jealous brother-in-law saw that modest young gentleman casting a wishful eye at his forbidden fruit, from the new tavern window.

Belv. You mistake the person, Mr Sparkish—I don't know what young lady you mean.

Harc. Explain yourself, Sparkish, you must mistake—Dick has never seen the girl.

Spark. I don't say he has; I only tell you what Moody says. Besides he went to the tavern himself, and enquired of the waiter who dined in the back room, No. 4, and they told him it was Mr Belville, your nephew; that's all I know of the matter, or desire to know of it, 'faith.

Harc. He kissed his hand, indeed, to your lady, Alithea, and is more in love with her than you are, and very near as much as I am; so look about you, such a youth may be dangerous.

Spark. The more danger the more honour: I defy you both; win her and wear her if you can—*Dolus an virtus* in love as well as in war—though you must be expeditious, 'faith; for I believe, if I don't change

my mind, I shall marry her to-morrow, or the day after. Have you no honest clergyman, Harcourt, no fellow collegian, to recommend to me to do the business?

Harc. Nothing ever, sure, was so lucky. [*Aside.*] Why, faith, I have, Sparkish; my brother, a twin brother, Ned Harcourt, will be in town to-day, and proud to attend your commands. I am a very generous rival, you see, to lend you my brother to marry the woman I love!

Spark. And so am I too, to let your brother come so near us—but Ned shall be the man; poor Alithea grows impatient—I can't put off the evil day any longer—I fancy the brute, her brother, has a mind to marry his country idiot at the same time.

Bel. How, country idiot, sir!

Harc. Taisez vous, bête. [*Aside to* BELVILLE.] I thought she had been married already.

Spark. No, no, he's not married, that's the joke of it.

Belv. No, no, he is not married.

Harc. Hold your tongue— [*Elbowing* BELVILLE.

Spark. Not he—I have the finest story to tell you—by the bye, he intends calling upon you, for he ask'd me where you lived, to complain of modesty there.—He picked up an old raking acquaintance of his, as we came along together,—Will Frankly, who saw him with his girl, sculking and muffled up, at the play last night: he plagued him much about matrimony, and his being ashamed to show himself: swore he was in love with his wife, and intended to cuckold him. "Do you?" cried Moody, folding his arms, and scowling with his eyes thus—"you must have more wit than you used to have—Besides, if you have as much as you think you have, I shall be out of your reach, and this profligate metropolis, in less than a week." Moody would fain have got rid of him, but the other held him by the sleeve, so I left them;

rejoiced most luxuriously to see the poor devil tormented.

Belv. I thought you said, just now, that he was not married: Is not that a contradiction, sir?

[HARCOURT *still makes signs to* BELVILLE.

Spark. Why, it is a kind of one—but, considering your modesty, and your ignorance of the young lady, you are pretty tolerably inquisitive, methinks, ha, Harcourt! ha, ha, ha!

Harc. Pooh, pooh! don't talk to that baby, tell me all you know.

Spark. You must know, my booby of a brother-in-law hath brought up this ward of his (a good fortune let me tell you) as he coops up and fattens his chickens, for his own eating: he is plaguy jealous of her, and was very sorry that he could not marry her in the country, without coming up to town; which he could not do, on account of some writings or other; so what does my gentleman? he persuades the poor silly girl, by breaking a sixpence, or some nonsense or another, that they are to all intents married in Heaven; but that the laws require the signing of articles, and the church service, to complete their union—so he has made her call him husband, and Bud, which she constantly does, and he calls her wife, and gives out she is married, that she may not look after younger fellows, nor younger fellows after her, egad; ha, ha, ha! and all won't do.

Bel. Thank you, sir—What heavenly news, uncle! [*Aside.*

Harc. What an idiot you are, nephew!—And so then you make but one trouble of it; and are both to be tacked together the same day?

Spark. No, no, he can't be married this week; he damns the lawyers for keeping him in town;——besides, I am out of favour; and he is continually snarling at me, and abusing me, for not being jea-

lous. [*Knocking at the door.*] There he is—I must not be seen with you, for he'll suspect something. I'll go with your nephew to his house, and we'll wait for you, and make a visit to my wife that is to be; and, perhaps, we shall show young modesty here a sight of Peggy too.

Enter WILLIAM.

Will. Sir, here's the strange, odd sort of a gentleman come again, and I have shown him into the fore parlour.

Spark. That must be Moody! Well said, Will; an odd sort of a strange gentleman indeed; we'll step into the next room till he comes into this, and then you may have him all to yourself—much good may it do you. [SPARKISH *going, returns.*] Remember that he is married, or he'll suspect me of betraying him.

[*Exeunt* SPARKISH *and* BELVILLE.

Harc. Shew him up, Will. [*Exit* WILLIAM.] Now must I prepare myself to see a very strange, though a very natural metamorphosis—a once high-spirited, handsome, well-dressed, raking prodigal of the town, sunk into a surly, suspicious, economical, country sloven——*Le voila!*

Enter MOODY.

Moody. Mr Harcourt, your humble servant——have you forgot me?

Harc. What, my old friend, Jack Moody! By thy long absence from the town, the grumness of thy countenance, and the slovenliness of thy habit, I should give thee joy—you are certainly married.

Moody. My long stay in the country will excuse my dress, and I have a suit at law that brings me up to town, and puts me out of humour—besides, I must give Sparkish ten thousand pounds to-morrow to take my sister off my hands.

Harc. Your sister is very much obliged to you——

being so much older than her, you have taken upon you the authority of a father, and have engaged her to a coxcomb.

Moody. I have; and to oblige her——nothing but coxcombs and debauchees are the favourites now-a-days, and a coxcomb is rather the more innocent animal of the two.

Harc. She has sense and taste, and can't like him; so you must answer for the consequences.

Moody. When she is out of my hands, her husband must look to consequences. He's a fashionable fool, and will cut his horns kindly.

Harc. And what is to secure your worship from consequences?—I did not expect marriage from such a rake——one that knew the town so well: fy, fy, Jack.

Moody. I'll tell you my security—I have married no London wife.

Harc. That's all one—that grave circumspection in marrying a country wife, is like refusing a deceitful, pamper'd Smithfield jade, to go and be cheated by a friend in the country.

Moody. I wish the devil had both him and his simile! [*Aside.*

Harc. Well, never grumble about it; what's done can't be undone; is your wife handsome and young?

Moody. She has little beauty but her youth, nothing to brag of but her health, and no attraction but her modesty——wholesome, homely, and housewifely—that's all.

Harc. You talk as like a grazier as you look, Jack,—why did you not bring her to town before, to be taught something?

Moody. Which something I might repent as long as I live.

Harc. But, pr'ythee, why would'st thou marry her, if she be ugly, ill-bred, and silly? She must be rich then.

Moody. As rich as if she had the wealth of the Mogul—she'll not ruin her husband, like a London baggage, with a million of vices he never heard of—then, because she's ugly, she's the likelier to be my own; and being ill-bred, she'll hate conversation; and, since silly and innocent, will not know the difference between me and you; that is, between a man of thirty and one of forty.

Harc. Fifty, to my knowledge—[MOODY *turns off, and grumbles.*] But see how you and I differ, Jack—wit to me is more necessary than beauty: I think no young woman ugly that has it; and no handsome woman agreeable without it.

Moody. 'Tis my maxim—He's a fool that marries; but he's a greater that does not marry a fool.——I know the town, Mr Harcourt, and my wife shall be virtuous in spite of you, or your nephew.

Harc. My nephew!—poor sheepish lad—he runs away from every woman he sees—he saw your sister Alithea at the opera, and was much smitten with her—He always toasts her—and hates the very name of Sparkish. I'll bring him to your house—and you shall see what a formidable Tarquin he is.

Moody. I have no curiosity, so give yourself no trouble. You have heard of a wolf in sheep's clothing, and I have seen your innocent nephew kissing his hands at my windows.

Harc. At your sister, I suppose; nor at her, unless he was tipsy. How can you, Jack, be so outrageously suspicious? Sparkish has promised to introduce him to his mistress.

Moody. Sparkish is a fool, and may be, what I'll take care not to be. I confess my visit to you, Mr Harcourt, was partly for old acquaintance sake, but chiefly to desire your nephew to confine his gallantries to the tavern, and not send them in looks, signs, or tokens, on the other side of the way. I keep no brothel—so pray tell your nephew. [*Going*

Harc. Nay, pr'ythee, Jack, leave me in better humour.—Well, I'll tell him, ha, ha, ha! poor Dick, how he'll stare! This will give him a reputation, and the girls won't laugh at him any longer. Shall we dine together at the tavern, and send for my nephew, to chide him for his gallantry? Ha, ha, ha! we shall have fine sport!

Moody. I am not to be laughed out of my senses, Mr Harcourt; I was once a modest, meek, young gentleman myself, and I never have been half so mischievous, before or since, as I was in that state of innocence. And so, old friend, make no ceremony with me—I have much business, and you have much pleasure, and therefore, as I hate forms, I will excuse your returning my visit, or sending your nephew to satisfy me of his modesty—and so your servant.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Chamber in MOODY'S *House.*

Enter MISS PEGGY *and* ALITHEA.

Peg. Pray, sister, where are the best fields and woods to walk in, in London?

Alith. A pretty question! Why, sister, Vauxhall, and Kensington Gardens, are the most frequented.

Peg. Pray, sister, tell me why my Bud looks so grum here in town, and keeps me up close, and will

not let me go a-walking, nor let me wear my best gown yesterday?

Alith. O, he's jealous, sister.

Peg. Jealous! what's that?

Alith. He's afraid you should love another man.

Peg. How should he be afraid of my loving another man, when he will not let me see any but himself?

Alith. Did he not carry you yesterday to a play?

Peg. Ay; but we sat amongst ugly people: he would not let me come near the gentry who sat under us, so that I could not see them. He told me, none but naughty women sat there—But I would have ventured for all that.

Alith. But how did you like the play?

Peg. Indeed I was weary of the play; but I liked hugeously the actors; they are the goodliest, properest men, sister—First, they are——

Alith. O, but you must not like the actors, sister.

Peg. Ay, how should I help it, sister? Pray, sister, when my guardian comes in, will you ask leave for me to go a-walking?

Alith. A-walking! ha, ha, ha! Lord, a country gentlewoman's pleasure is the drudgery of a foot post; and she requires as much airing as her husband's horses! [*Aside.*] But here comes my brother; I'll ask him, though I'm sure he'll not grant it.

Enter MOODY.

Peg. O my dear, dear Bud, welcome home; why dost thou look so fropish? Who has nanger'd thee?

Moody. You're a fool. [PEGGY *goes aside, and cries.*

Alith. 'Faith, and so she is, for crying for no fault; poor tender creature!

Moody. What, would you have her as impudent as yourself, as arrant a gilflirt, a gadder, a magpie, and, to say all, a mere notorious town woman!

Alith. Brother, you are my only censurer; and the

honour of your family will sooner suffer in your wife that is to be, than in me, though I take the innocent liberty of the town!

Moody. Hark you, mistress, do not talk so before my wife: the innocent liberty of the town!

Alith. Pray, what ill people frequent my lodgings? I keep no company with any woman of scandalous reputation.

Moody. No, you keep the men of scandalous reputation company.

Alith. Would you not have me civil, answer them at public places, walk with them when they join me in the Park or Vauxhall?

Moody. Hold, hold; do not teach my wife where the men are to be found: I believe she's the worse for your town documents already. I bid you keep her in ignorance, as I do.

Peg. Indeed, be not angry with her, Bud, she will tell me nothing of the town, though I ask her a thousand times a day.

Moody. Then you are very inquisitive to know, I find?

Peg. Not I indeed, dear; I hate London: our own house in the country is worth a thousand of't; 'would I were there again!

Moody. So you shall, I warrant. But were you not talking of plays and players when I came in? you are her encourager in such discourses.

Peg. No, indeed, dear; she chid me just now for liking the player-men.

Moody. Nay, if she is so innocent as to own to me her liking them, there is no hurt in't. [*Aside.*] Come, my poor rogue, but thou likest none better than me, though?

Peg. Yes, indeed, but I do though; the player-men are finer folks.

Moody. But you love none better than me?

Peg. You are my own dear Bud, and I know you; I hate strangers.

Moody. Ay, my dear, you must love me only; and not be like the naughty town women, who only hate their husbands, and love every man else; love plays, visits, fine coaches, fine clothes, fiddles, balls, treats, and so lead a wicked town life.

Peg. Nay, if to enjoy all these things be a town life, London is not so bad a place, dear.

Moody. How! if you love me, you must hate London.

Peg. But, Bud, do the town women love the player-men too?

Moody. Ay, I warrant you.

Peg. Ay, I warrant you.

Moody. Why, you do not, I hope?

Peg. No, no, Bud; but why have we no player-men in the country?

Moody. Ha! Mrs Minx, ask me no more to go to a play.

Peg. Nay, why, love? I did not care for going; but when you forbid me, you make me, as 'twere, desire it.

Alith. So 'twill be in other things, I warrant. [*Aside.*

Peg. Pray let me go to a play, dear.

Moody. Hold your peace, I won't.

Peg. Why, love?

Moody. Why, I'll tell you.

Peg. Pray, why, dear?

Moody. First, you like the actors.

Peg. Ay, that I do indeed.

Moody. And the gallants may like you.

Peg. What, a homely country girl? No, Bud, nobody will like me.

Moody. I tell you yes, they may.

Peg. No, no, you jest—I won't believe you: I will go.

Moody. I tell you then, that one of the most raking fellows in town, who saw you there, told me he was in love with you.

Peg. Indeed! who, who, pray, who was't?

Moody. I've gone too far, and slipt before I was aware. How overjoyed she is! [*Aside.*

Peg. Was it any Hampshire gallant, or any of our neighbours?——Promise you I am beholden to him.

Moody. I promise you, you lie; for he would ruin you, as he has done hundreds.

Peg. Ay, but if he loves me, why should he ruin me? answer me to that. Methinks, he should not; I would do him no harm.

Moody. 'Tis very well; but I'll keep him from doing you any harm, or me either. But here comes company; get you in, get you in.

Peg. But pray, husband, is he a pretty gentleman that loves me?

Moody. In, baggage, in.

[*Thrusts her in, and shuts the door.*

Enter SPARKISH, HARCOURT, *and* BELVILLE.

Moody. What, all the libertines of the town brought to my lodging, by this easy coxcomb! 'Sdeath, I'll not suffer it.

Spark. Here, Belville, do you approve my choice? Dear little rogue, I told you, I'd bring you acquainted with all my friends, the wits.

Moody. Ay, they shall know her as well as you yourself will, I warrant you.

Spark. This is one of those, my pretty rogue, that are to dance at your wedding to-morrow. And one you must make welcome, for he's modest. [BELVILLE *salutes.* ALITHEA.] Harcourt makes himself welcome, and has not the same foible, though of the same family.

Harc. You are too obliging, Sparkish.

Moody. And so he is, indeed. The fop's horns will

as naturally sprout upon his brows, as mushrooms upon dunghills.

Harc. This, Mr Moody, is my nephew you mentioned to me; I would bring him with me, for a sight of him will be sufficient, without poppy or mandragora, to restore you to your rest.

Belv. I am sorry, sir, that any mistake or imprudence of mine should have given you any uneasiness; it was not so intended, I assure you, sir.

Moody. It may be so, sir, but not the less criminal for that—My wife, sir, must not be smirked and nodded at from tavern windows; I am a good shot, young gentleman, and don't suffer magpies to come near my cherries.

Belv. Was it your wife, sir?

Moody. What's that to you, sir—suppose it was my grandmother?

Belv. I would not dare to offend her—permit me to say a word in private to you.

[*Exeunt* MOODY *and* BELVILLE.

Spark. Now old Surly is gone, tell me, Harcourt, if thou likest her as well as ever——My dear, don't look down, I should hate to have a wife of mine out of countenance at any thing.

Alith. For shame, Mr Sparkish.

Spark. Tell me, I say, Harcourt, how dost like her? thou hast stared upon her enough to resolve me.

Harc. So infinitely well, that I could wish I had a mistress too, that might differ from her in nothing but her love and engagement to you.

Alith. Sir, Mr Sparkish has often told me, that his acquaintance were all wits and railers, and now I find it.

Spark. No, by the universe, madam, he does not rally now; you may believe him; I do assure you he is the honestest, worthiest, true-hearted gentleman; a man of such perfect honour, he would say nothing to a lady he does not mean.

Harc. Sir, you are so beyond expectation obliging, that——

Spark. Nay, egad, I am sure you do admire her extremely, I see it in your eyes——He does admire you, madam, he has told me so a thousand and a thousand times—Have you not, Harcourt? You do admire her, by the world you do—don't you?

Harc. Yes, above the world, or the most glorious part of it, her whole sex; and, till now, I never thought I should have envied you or any man about to marry: but you have the best excuse to marry I ever knew.

Alith. Nay, now, sir, I am satisfied you are of the society of the wits and railers, since you cannot spare your friend, even when he is most civil to you; but the surest sign is, you are an enemy to marriage, the common butt of every railer.

Harc. Truly, madam, I was never an enemy to marriage till now, because marriage was never an enemy to me before.

Alith. But why, sir, is marriage an enemy to you now? because it robs you of your friend here? for you look upon a friend married, as one gone into a monastery, that is dead to the world.

Harc. 'Tis indeed, because you marry him: I see, madam, you can guess my meaning: I do confess, heartily and openly, I wish it were in my power to break the match; by Heavens I would.

Spark. Poor Frank!

Alith. Would you be so unkind to me?

Harc. No, no, 'tis not because I would be unkind to you

Spark. Poor Frank; no, egad, 'tis only his kindness to me.

Alith. Great kindness to you indeed!—Insensible! Let a man make love to his mistress to his face!

[*Aside.*

Spark. Pr'ythee, Frank, dost think my wife, that shall be, there, a fine person?

Harc. I could gaze upon her, till I became as blind as you are.

Spark. How, as I am ? how ?

Harc. Because you are a lover, and true lovers are blind, stock blind.

Spark. True, true ; but, by the world, she has wit too, as well as beauty ; go, go with her into a corner, and try if she has wit ; talk to her any thing, she's bashful before me. [HARCOURT *courts* ALITHEA *aside.*

Enter MOODY.

Moody. How, sir ! if you are not concerned for the honour of a wife, I am for that of a sister ;—be a pander to your own wife, bring men to her, let them make love before your face, thrust them into a corner together, then leave them in private ! is this your town wit and conduct ?

Spark. Ha, ha, ha ! a silly wise rogue would make one laugh more than a stark fool : ha, ha, ha ! I shall burst. Nay, you shall not disturb them : I'll vex thee, by the world. What have you done with Belville ?

[*Struggles with* MOODY, *to keep him from* HARCOURT *and* ALITHEA.

Moody. Shown him the way out of my house, as you should to that gentleman.

Spark. Nay, but pr'ythee—let me reason with thee. [*Talks aside with* MOODY.

Alith. The writings are drawn, sir, settlements made ; 'tis too late, sir, and past all revocation.

Harc. Then so is my death.

Alith. I would not be unjust to him.

Harc. Then why to me so ?

Alith. I have no obligations to you.

Harc. My love.

Alith. I had his before.

Harc. You never had it ; he wants, you see, jealousy, the only infallible sign of it.

Alith. Love proceeds from esteem; he cannot distrust my virtue; besides, he loves me, or he would not marry me.

Harc. Marrying you is no more a sign of his love, than bribing your woman that he may marry you is a sign of his generosity. But if you take marriage for a sign of love, take it from me immediately.

Alith. No, now you have put a scruple in my head: but, in short, sir, to end our dispute, I must marry him; my reputation would suffer in the world else.

Harc. No; if you do marry him, with your pardon, madam, your reputation suffers in the world.

Alith. Nay, now you are rude, sir—Mr Sparkish, pray come hither; your friend here is very troublesome, and very loving.

Harc. Hold, hold! [*Aside to* ALITHEA.

Moody. D'ye hear that senseless puppy?

Spark. Why, d'ye think I'll seem jealous, like a country bumpkin?

Moody. No, rather be dishonoured, like a credulous driveller.

Harc. Madam, you would not have been so little generous as to have told him?

Alith. Yes, since you could be so little generous as to wrong him.

Harc. Wrong him! no man can do't; he's beneath an injury; a bubble, a coward, a senseless idiot, a wretch so contemptible to all the world but you, that——

Alith. Hold, do not rail at him; for, since he is like to be my husband, I am resolved to like him; nay, I think, I am obliged to tell him you are not his friend —Mr Sparkish! Mr Sparkish!

Spark. What, what? now, dear rogue, has not she wit?

Harc. Not so much as I thought and hoped she had. [*Surlily.*

Alith. Mr Sparkish, do you bring people to rail at you?

Spark. How! no; but if he does rail at me, 'tis but in jest, I warrant; what we wits do for one another, and never take any notice of it.

Alith. He spoke so scurrilously of you, I had no patience to hear him.

Moody. And he was in the right on't.

Alith. Besides, he has been making love to me.

Moody. And I told the fool so.

Harc. True, damned tell-tale woman! [*Aside.*

Spark. Pshaw, to shew his parts—We wits rail and make love often, but to shew our parts; as we have no affections, so we have no malice; we——

Moody. Did you ever hear such an ass!

Alith He said, you were a wretch below an injury.

Spark. Pshaw!

Alith A common bubble.

Spark. Pshaw!

Alith. A coward.

Spark. Pshaw, pshaw!

Alith. A senseless drivelling idiot.

Moody. True, true, true; all true.

Spark. How! did he disparage my parts? nay, then my honour's concerned. I can't put up that, sir, by the world! brother, help me to kill him.

[*Offers to draw.*

Alith. Hold! hold!

Moody. If Harcourt would but kill Sparkish, and run away with my sister, I should be rid of three plagues at once.

Alith. Hold! hold! Indeed, to tell the truth, the gentleman said, after all, that what he spoke was but out of friendship to you.

Spark. How! say I am a fool, that is, no wit, out of friendship to me?

Alith. Yes, to try whether I was concerned enough

for you; and made love to me only to be satisfied of my virtue for your sake.

Harc. Kind, however! [*Aside.*

Spark. Nay, if it were so, my dear rogue, I ask thee pardon;—but why would you not tell me so, 'faith?

Harc. Because I did not think on't, 'faith!

Spark. Come, Belville is gone away; Harcourt, let's be gone to the new play—Come, madam.

Alith. I will not go, if you intend to leave me alone in the box, and run all about the house, as you use to do.

Spark. Pshaw, I'll leave Harcourt with you in the box, to entertain you, and that's as good; if I sat in the box, I should be thought no critic—I must run about, my dear, and abuse the author—Come away, Harcourt, lead her down. B'ye, brother.

[*Exeunt* SPARKISH, ALITHEA, *and* HARCOURT.

Moody. B'ye, driveller. Well, go thy ways, for the flower of the true town fops, such as spend their estates before they come to them, and are cuckolds before they're married. But let me go look to my freehold.

Enter ROBIN, *a* SERVANT BOY.

Robin. Master, your worship's servant—here is the lawyer counsellor gentleman, with a green bag full of papers, come again, and would be glad to speak with you.

Moody. Now here's some other damned impediment, which the law has thrown in our way—I shall never marry the girl, nor get clear of the smoke and wickedness of this cursed town. Where is he?

Robin. He's below in a coach, with three other lawyer counsellor gentlemen. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

A Chamber.

Enter Miss Peggy *and* Lucy.

Lucy. What ails you, Miss Peggy? You are grown quite melancholy.

Peg. Would it not make any one melancholy to see your mistress, Alithea, go every day fluttering about abroad to plays and assemblies, and I know not what, whilst I must stay at home, like a poor, lonely, sullen bird in a cage?

Lucy. Dear Miss Peggy, I thought you chose to be confined: I imagined that you had been bred so young to the cage, that you had no pleasure in flying about and hopping in the open air, as other young ladies, who go a little wild about this town.

Peg. Nay, I confess, I was quiet enough till somebody told me what pure lives the London ladies lead, with their dancing meetings and junketings, and dressed every day in their best gowns; and, I warrant you, play at nine-pins every day in the week, so they do.

Lucy. To be sure, miss, you will lead a better life when joined in holy wedlock with your sweet-tempered guardian, the cheerful Mr Moody.

Peg. I can't lead a worse, that's one good thing—but I must make the best of a bad market, for I can't marry nobody else. I am almost as bad as the poor girl in the country, who could get no sweetheart at all.

Lucy. But you said, miss, you could marry no one

else, but your guardian. How so, miss? that's very strange.

Peg. Why we have a contraction to one another—so we are as good as married, you know——

Lucy. I know it? Heaven forbid, miss——

Peg. Heigho!

Lucy. Don't sigh, Miss Peggy—if that young gentleman, who was here just now, would take pity on me, I'd throw such a contract as yours behind the fire.

Peg. Lord bless us, how you talk!

Lucy. Young Mr Belville would make you talk otherwise, if you knew him.

Peg. Mr Belville!—where is he?—when did you see him?—you have undone me, Lucy—where was he? did he say any thing?

Lucy. Say any thing! very little, indeed—he's quite distracted, poor young creature; he was talking with your guardian just now.

Peg. The deuce he was!—but where was it, and when was it?

Lucy. In this house, five minutes ago, when your guardian turned you into your chamber, for fear of your being seen.

Peg. I knew something was the matter, I was in such a flutter.—But what did he say to my Bud?

Lucy. What do you call him Bud for? Bud means husband, and he is not your husband yet—and I hope never will be; and if he was my husband, I'd bud him, a surly, unreasonable beast!

Peg. I'd call him any names, to keep him in good humour; if he'd let me marry any body else, (which I can't do,) I'd call him husband as long as he lived.—But what said Mr Belville to him?

Lucy. I don't know what he said to him, but I'll tell you what he said to me, with a sigh, and his hand upon his breast, as he went out of the door:—If you

ever were in love, young gentlewoman, (meaning me,) and can pity a most faithful lover, tell the dear object of my affections——

Peg. Meaning me, Lucy?

Lucy. Yes, you, to be sure—tell the dear object of my affections, I live but upon the hopes that she is not married; and, when those hopes leave me—— she knows the rest——then he cast his eyes up thus —gnashed his teeth—struck his forehead—would have spoke again, but could not—fetched a deep sigh, and vanished.

Peg. That is really very fine—I'm sure it makes my heart sink within me, and brings tears into my eyes—O, he's a charming, sweet——but hush, hush, I hear my husband!

Lucy. Don't call him husband. Go into the Park this evening if you can.

Peg. Mum, mum——

Enter MOODY.

Moody. Come, what's here to do? You are putting the town pleasures into her head, and setting her a-longing.

Lucy. Yes, after nine-pins: you suffer none to give her those longings you mean, but yourself.

Moody. Come, Mrs Flippant, good precepts are lost, when bad examples are still before us: the liberty your mistress takes abroad, makes her hanker after it, and out of humour at home: poor wretch! she desired not to come to London; I would bring her.

Lucy. O yes, you surfeit her with pleasures.

Moody. She has been this fortnight in town, and never desired, till this afternoon, to go abroad.

Lucy. Was she not at the play yesterday?

Moody. Yes, but she never asked me. I was myself the cause of her going.

Lucy. Then if she ask you again, you are the cause of her asking, and not my mistress.

Moody. Well, next week I shall be rid of you all, rid of this town, and my dreadful apprehensions. Come, be not melancholy, for thou shalt go into the country very soon, dearest.

Peg. Pshaw! what d'ye tell me of the country for?

Moody. How's this! what, flout at the country!

Peg. Let me alone, I am not well.

Moody. O, if that be all——what ails my dearest?

Peg. Truly, I don't know; but I have not been well since you told me there was a gallant at the play in love with me.

Moody. Ha!

Lucy. That's my mistress too.

Moody. Nay, if you are not well, but are so concerned because a raking fellow chanced to lie, and say he liked you, you'll make me sick too.

Peg. Of what sickness?

Moody. O, of that which is worse than the plague, jealousy.

Peg. Pshaw, you jeer: I'm sure there's no such disease in your receipt book at home.

Moody. No, thou never met'st with it, poor innocent.

Peg. Well; but pray, Bud, let's go to the play to-night.

Moody. No, no;—no more plays.—But why are you so eager to see a play?

Peg. 'Faith, dear, not that I care one pin for their talk there; but I like to look upon the player-men, and would see, if I could, the gallant you say loves me: that's all, dear Bud.

Moody. Is that all, dear Bud?

Lucy. This proceeds from my mistress's example.

Peg. Let's go abroad, however, dear Bud, if we don't go to the play.

Moody. Come, have a little patience, and thou shalt go into the country next week.

Peg. Therefore I would see first some sights, to

tell my neighbours of: nay, I will go abroad, that's once.

Moody. What, you have put this into her head?

Lucy. Heaven defend me, what suspicions! somebody has put more things into your head than you ought to have.

Moody. Your tongue runs too glibly, madam, and you have lived too long with a London lady, to be a proper companion for innocence. I am not over fond of you, mistress.

Lucy. There's no love lost between us, master.

Moody. You admitted those gentlemen into the house, when I said I would not be at home; and there was the young fellow too, who behaved so indecently to my wife at the tavern window.

Lucy. Because you would not let him see your handsome wife out of your lodgings.

Peg. Why, O Lord! did the gentleman come hither to see me, indeed?

Moody. No, no; you are not the cause of that damned question too.

Peg. Come, pray, Bud, let's go abroad before 'tis late; for I will go, that's flat and plain—only into the Park.

Moody. So! the obstinacy already of the town wife; and I must, whilst she's here, humour her like one. [*Aside.*] How shall we do, that she may not be seen or known?

Lucy. Muffle her up with a bonnet and handkerchief, and I'll go with her, to avoid suspicion.

Moody. No, no, I'm obliged to you for your kindness, but she sha'n't stir without me.

Lucy. What will you do then?

Peg. What, shall we go? I am sick with staying at home: if I don't walk in the Park, I'll do nothing that I'm bid for a week—I won't be moped.

Lucy. O, she has a charming spirit! I could stand

your friend now, and would, if you had ever a civil word to give me.

Moody. I'll give thee a better thing, I'll give thee a guinea for thy good advice, if I like it; and I can have the best of the college for the same money.

Lucy. I despise a bribe—when I am your friend, it shall be without fee or reward.

Peg. Don't be long then, for I will go out.

Lucy. The tailor brought home last night the clothes you intend for a present to your godson in the country.

Peg. You must not tell that, Lucy.

Lucy. But I will, madam—When you were with your lawyers last night, Miss Peggy, to divert me and herself, put 'em on, and they fitted her to a hair.

Moody. Thank you, thank you, Lucy, 'tis the luckiest thought! Go this moment, Peggy, into your chamber, and put them on again—and you shall walk with me into the Park, as my godson. Well thought of, Lucy—I shall love you for ever for this.

Peg. And so shall I too, Lucy, I'll put 'em on directly. [*Going, returns.*] Suppose, Bud, I must keep on my petticoats, for fear of shewing my legs.

Moody. No, no, you fool, never mind your legs.

Peg. No more I will then, Bud; this is pure. [*Exit rejoiced.*]

Moody. What a simpleton it is! Well, Lucy, I thank you for the thought, and, before I leave London, thou shalt be convinced how much I am obliged to thee. [*Exit, smiling.*

Lucy. And before you leave London, Mr Moody, I hope I shall convince you how much you are obliged to me. [*Exit.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

The Park.

Enter BELVILLE *and* HARCOURT.

Belv. And the moment Moody left me, and before I left his lodgings, I took an opportunity of conveying some tender sentiments, through Lucy, to Miss Peggy, and 'twas Lucy advised me to stroll here this evening, and here I am, in expectation of seeing my country goddess.

Harc. And so to blind Moody, and take him off the scent of your passion for this girl, and at the same time to give me an opportunity with Sparkish's mistress (and of which I have made the most) you hinted to him, with a grave melancholy face, that you were dying for his sister—'Gad-a-mercy, nephew! I will back thy modesty against any other in the three kingdoms—It will do, Dick.

Belv. What could I do, uncle?—it was my last stake, and I played for a great deal.

Harc. You mistake me, Dick——I don't say you could do better——I only can't account for your modesty's doing so much; you have done such wonders, that I, who am rather bold than sheepish, have not yet ceased wondering at you. But do you think that you imposed upon him?

Belv. 'Faith, I can't say——he said very little grumbled much, shook his head, and shewed me

the door. But what success have you had with Alithea?

Harc. Just enough to have a glimmering of hope, without having light enough to see an inch before my nose——This day will produce something; Alithea is a woman of great honour, and will sacrifice her happiness to it, unless Sparkish's absurdity stands my friend, and does every thing that the fates ought to do for me.

Belv. Yonder comes the prince of coxcombs, and if your mistress and mine should by chance be tripping this way, this fellow will spoil sport——let us avoid him. You can't cheat him before his face.

Harc. But I can though, thanks to my wit, and his want of it,

Belv. But you cannot come near his mistress but in his company.

Harc. Still the better for me, nephew, for fools are most easily cheated, when they themselves are accessaries; and he is to be bubbled of his mistress, or of his money, (the common mistress,) by keeping him company.

Enter SPARKISH.

Spark. Who's that that is to be bubbled? 'faith, let me snack; I ha'n't met with a bubble since Christmas. 'Gad, I think bubbles are like their brother woodcocks, go out with the cold weather.

Harc. He did not hear all, I hope.

[*Aside to* BELVILLE.

Spark. Come, you bubbling rogues you, where do we sup? O Harcourt, my mistress tells me you have made love, fierce love, to her last night, all the play long; ha, ha, ha!

Harc. I make love to her!

Spark. Nay, I forgive thee; I think I know you, I think I know her, but I am sure I know myself.

Belv. Do you, sir? Then you are the wisest man in the world, and I honour you as such. [*Bowing.*

Spark. O, your servant, sir, you are at your raillery, are you? You can't oblige me more—I'm your man—He'll meet with his match—Ha! Harcourt!—Did not you hear me laugh prodigiously at the play last night?

Harc. Yes, and was very much disturbed at it.—You put the actors and audience into confusion—and all your friends out of countenance.

Spark. So much the better——I love confusion ——and to see folks out of countenance——I was in tip-top spirits, 'faith, and said a thousand good things.

Belv. But I thought you had gone to plays to laugh at the poet's good things, and not at your own.

Spark. Your servant, sir: no, I thank you. 'Gad, I go to a play, as to a country treat: I carry my own wine to one, and my own wit to t'other, or else I'm sure I should not be merry at either: and the reason why we are so often louder than the players is, because we hate authors damnably.

Belv. But why should you hate the poor rogues? you have too much wit, and despise writing, I'm sure.

Spark. O yes, I despise writing. But women, women, that make men do all foolish things, make 'em write songs too. Every body does it: 'tis e'en as common with lovers as playing with fans, and you can no more help rhyming to your Phillis, than drinking to your Phillis.

Harc. But the poets damned your songs, did they?

Spark. O yes, damn the poets, they turned them into burlesque, as they call it: that burlesque is a hocus-pocus trick they have got, by which, by the virtue of hictius doctius, topsy turvey, they make a clever witty thing absolute nonsense! Do you know, Har-

court, that they ridiculed my last song, Twang, twang, the best I ever wrote?

Harc. That may be, and be very easily ridiculed, for all that.

Belv. Favour me with it, sir, I never heard it.

Spark. What, and have all the Park about us?

Harc. Which you'll not dislike, and so, pr'ythee begin.

Spark. I never am asked twice, and so have at you.

SONG.

Tell not me of the roses and lilies,
Which tinge the fair check of your Phillis,
Tell not me of the dimples and eyes,
For which silly Corydon dies:
Let all whining lovers go hang;
My heart would you hit,
Tip your arrow with wit,
And it comes to my heart with a twang, twang,
And it comes to my heart with a twang.

I am rock to the handsome and pretty,
Can only be touch'd by the witty;
And beauty will ogle in vain,
The way to my heart's through my brain.
Let all whining lovers go hang;
We wits, you must know,
Have two strings to our bow,
To return them their darts with a twang, twang,
And return them their darts with a twang.

[*At the end of the Song,* HARCOURT *and* BELVILLE *steal away from* SPARKISH, *and leave him singing.* ——*He sinks his voice by degrees, at the surprise of their being gone; then*

Enter HARCOURT *and* BELVILLE.

Spark. What the deuce did you go away for?

Harc. Your mistress is coming.

Spark. The devil she is—O hide, hide me from her!

[*Hides behind* HARCOURT.

Harc. She sees you.

Spark. But I will not see her: for I'm engaged, and at this instant. [*Looking at his Watch.*

Harc. Pray first take me, and reconcile me to her.

Spark. Another time; 'faith, it is to a lady, and one cannot make excuses to a woman.

Belv. You have need of them, I believe.

Spark. Pshaw, pr'ythee hide me.

Enter MOODY, PEGGY, (*in Boy's Clothes,*) *and* ALITHEA.

Harc. Your servant, Mr Moody.

Moody. Come along— [*To* PEGGY.

Peg. Lau!—what a sweet, delightful place this is!

Moody. Come along, I say—don't stare about you so—you'll betray yourself—

[*Exit* MOODY, *pulling* PEGGY, ALITHEA *following.*

Harc. He does not know us—

Belv. Or he won't know us—

Spark. So much the better—

[*Exit* BELVILLE *after them.*

Harc. Who is that pretty youth with him, Sparkish?

Spark. Some relation of Peggy's, I suppose, for he is something like her in the face and gawkiness.

Enter BELVILLE.

Belv. By all my hopes, uncle—Peggy in boy's clothes—I am all over agitation!

[*Aside to* HARCOURT.

Harc. Be quiet, or you'll spoil all. They return ——Alithea has seen you, Sparkish, and will be an.

gry if you don't go to her: besides, I would fain be reconciled to her, which none but you can do, my dear friend.

Spark. Well, that's a better reason, dear friend: I would not go near her now for hers or my own sake; but I can deny you nothing: for, though I have known thee a great while, never go, if I do not love thee as well as a new acquaintance.

Harc. I am obliged to you, indeed, my dear friend: I would be well with her, only to be well with thee still; for these ties to wives usually dissolve all ties to friends.

Spark. But they sha'n't, though—Come along.

[*They retire.*

Enter MOODY, PEGGY, *and* ALITHEA.

Moody. Sister, if you will not go, we must leave you. [*To* ALITHEA.] The fool, her gallant, and she, will muster up all the young saunterers of this place. What a swarm of cuckolds and cuckold-makers are here! I begin to be uneasy. [*Aside.*] Come, let's be-gone, Peggy.

Peg. Don't you believe that, I ha'n't half my belly full of sights yet.

Moody. Then walk this way.

Peg. Lord, what a power of fine folks are here!—And Mr Belville, as I hope to be married! [*Aside.*

Moody. Come along, what are you a muttering at?

Peg There's the young gentleman there you were so angry about—that's in love with me.

Moody. No, no, he's a dangler after your sister—or pretends to be—but they are all bad alike—Come along, I say. [*He pulls her away.*

[*Exeunt* PEGGY *and* MOODY. BELVILLE *following.*—SPARKISH, HARCOURT, *and* ALITHEA *come forward.*

Spark. Come, dear madam, for my sake you shall be reconciled to him.

Alith. For your sake I hate him.

Harc. That's something too cruel, madam, to hate me for his sake.

Spark. Ay, indeed, madam, too, too cruel to me, to hate my friend for my sake.

Alith. I hate him because he is your enemy; and you ought to hate him too, for making love to me, if you love me.

Spark. That's a good one! I hate a man for loving you! if he did love you, 'tis but what he can't help; and 'tis your fault, not his, if he admires you.

Alith. Is it for your honour, or mine, to suffer a man to make love to me, who am to marry you to-morrow?

Harc. But why, dearest madam, will you be more concerned for his honour than he is himself? Let his honour alone for my sake and his. He has no honour.

Spark. How's that?

Harc. But what my dear friend can guard himself.

Spark. O ho——that's right again.

Alith. You astonish me, sir, with want of jealousy.

Spark. And you make me giddy, madam, with your jealousy and fears, and virtue and honour. 'Gad, I see virtue makes a woman as troublesome as a little reading or learning.

Harc. Come, madam, you see you strive in vain to make him jealous of me: my dear friend is the kindest creature in the world to me.

Spark. Poor fellow!

Harc. But his kindness only is not enough for me, without your favour, your good opinion, dear madam, 'tis that must perfect my happiness. Good gentleman, he believes all I say: 'would you would do so! —Jealous of me! I would not wrong him nor you for the world.

Spark. Look you there: hear him, hear him, and not walk away so. Come back again.

[ALITHEA *walks carelessly to, and fro.*

Harc. I love you, madam, so—

Spark. How's that! nay—now you begin to go too far indeed.

Harc. So much, I confess, I say, I love you, that I would not have you miserable, and cast yourself away upon so unworthy and inconsiderable a thing as what you see here.

[*Clapping his Hand on his Breast, points to* SPARKISH.

Spark. No, 'faith, I believe thou wouldst not; now his meaning is plain; but I knew before thou wouldst not wrong me nor her.

Harc. No, no, Heavens forbid the glory of her sex should fall so low, as into the embraces of such a contemptible wretch, the least of mankind—my dear friend here—I injure him! [*Embracing* SPARKISH.

Spark. No, no, dear friend, I knew it: Madam, you see he will rather wrong himself than me in giving himself such names.

Alith. Do not you understand him yet?

Spark. Come, come, you shall stay till he has saluted you, that I may be assured you are friends, after his honest advice and declaration; come, pray, madam, be friends with him.

Enter MOODY *and* PEGGY. BELVILLE *at a distance.*

Moody. What, invite your wife to kiss men? Monstrous! Are you not ashamed?

Spark. Are you not ashamed, that I should have more confidence in the chastity of your family, than you have? You must not teach me, I am a man of honour, sir, though I am frank and free; I am frank, sir—

Moody. Very frank, sir, to share your wife with

your friends.—You seem to be angry, and yet won't go. [*To* ALITHEA.

Alith. No impertinence shall drive me away.

Moody. Because you like it.—But you ought to blush at exposing your wife as you do.

Spark. What then? It may be I have a pleasure in't, as I have to show fine clothes at a playhouse, the first day, and count money before poor rogues.

Moody. He that shows his wife or money will be in danger of having them borrowed sometimes.

Spark. I love to be envied, and would not marry a wife that I alone could love. Loving alone is as dull as eating alone; and so good night, for I must to Whitehall.—Madam, I hope you are now reconciled to my friend; and so I wish you a good night, madam, and sleep if you can; for to-morrow, you know, I must visit you early with a canonical gentleman. Good night, dear Harcourt—remember to send your brother. [*Exit* SPARKISH.

Harc. You may depend upon me.—Madam, I hope you will not refuse my visit to-morrow, if it should be earlier, with a canonical gentleman, than Mr Sparkish?

Moody. This gentlewoman is yet under my care, therefore you must yet forbear your freedom with her.

Harc. Must, sir!

Moody. Yes, sir, she is my sister.

Harc. 'Tis well she is, sir——for I must be her servant, sir——Madam——

Moody. Come away, sister; we had been gone if it had not been for you, and so avoided these lewd rakes hells, who seem to haunt us.

Harc. I see a little time in the country makes a man turn wild and unsociable, and only fit to converse with his horses, dogs, and his herds.

Moody, I have business, sir, and must mind it: your business is pleasure, therefore you and I must go different ways.

Harc. Well, you may go on; but this pretty young gentleman [*Takes hold of* PEGGY.] shall stay with us, for I suppose his business is the same with ours, pleasure.

Moody. 'Sdeath, he knows her, she carries it so sillily; yet, if he does not, I should be more silly to discover it first. [*Aside.*] Come, come.

Harc. Had you not rather stay with us? [*To* PEGGY.] Pr'ythee, who is this pretty young fellow?

Moody. One to whom I am a guardian.—I wish I could keep her out of your hands. [*Aside.*

Harc. Who is he? I never saw any thing so pretty in all my life.

Moody. Pshaw, do not look upon him so much. He's a poor bashful youth, you'll put him out of countenance. [*Offers to take her away.*

Harc. Here, nephew, let me introduce this young gentleman to your acquaintance.—You are very like, and of the same age, and should know one another—Salute him, Dick, à la Françoise.

[BELVILLE *kisses her.*

Moody. I hate French fashions. Men kiss one another! [*Endeavours to take hold of her.*

Peg. I am out of my wits——What do you kiss me for? I am no woman.

Harc. But you are ten times handsomer.

Peg. Nay, now you jeer one; and pray don't jeer me.

Harc. Kiss him again, Dick.

Moody. No, no, no; come away, come away.

[*To* PEGGY.

Harc. Why, what haste are you in? Why won't you let me talk with him?

Moody. Because you'll debauch him: he's yet young and innocent. How she gazes upon him! The devil! [*Aside.*] Come, pray, let him go, I cannot stay fooling any longer; I tell you my wife stays supper for us.

Harc. Does she? Come, then, we'll all go sup with her.

Moody. No, no—now I think on't, having staid so long for us, I warrant she's gone to bed.—I wish she and I were well out of your hands. [*Aside.*

Harc. Well then, if she be gone to bed, I wish her and you a good night. But pray, young gentleman, present my humble service to her.

Peg. Thank you heartily, sir. [*Bowing.*

Moody. 'Sdeath, she will discover herself yet, in spite of me! [*Aside.*

Belv. And mine too, sir.

Peg. That I will, indeed. [*Bowing.*

Harc. Pray give her this kiss for me.

[*Kisses* PEGGY.

Peg. Thank you, sir.

Moody O heavens, what do I suffer!

Belv. And this for me. [*Kisses* PEGGY.

Peg. Gentlemen, I'm very much obliged to you both. [*Curtsies.*

Moody. O the idiot! now 'tis out! ten thousand cankers gnaw away their lips. Come, come, driveller. [*Exit.*

Harc. and Belv. Ha! ha! ha!

[*Exeunt* HARCOURT *and* BELVILLE *laughing.*

Re-enter MOODY.

Moody. So, they are gone at last—Sister, stay with Peggy till I find my servant—don't let her stir an inch—I'll be back directly. [*Exit.*

HARCOURT *and* BELVILLE *return.*

Harc. What, not gone yet?—Nephew, show the young gentleman Rosamond's pond, while I speak another word to this lady.

[*Exeunt* BELVILLE *and* PEGGY.

Enter MOODY.

Moody. Where! how!—what's become of—gone—whither?—

Alith. In the next walk only, brother.

Moody. Only, only! where, where? [*Exit.*

[BELVILLE *and* PEGGY *run across.*

Enter MOODY.

Moody. Gone, gone, not to be found; quite gone; ten thousand plagues go with 'em! which way went they?

Alith. But in t'other walk, brother.

Moody. T'other walk—t'other devil! Where are they, I say?

Alith. You are too abusive, brother, and too violent about trifles.

Moody. You know where they are, you infamous wretch, eternal shame of your family; which you do not dishonour enough yourself, you think, but you must help her to it too, thou legion of—

Alith. Good brother—

Moody. False, false sister! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Another Part of the Park.

Enter BELVILLE *and* MISS PEGGY.

Belv. No disguise could conceal you from my heart; I pretended not to know you, that I might deceive the dragon, that continually watches over you—but now he's asleep, let us fly from misery to happiness.

Peg. Indeed, Mr Belville, as well as I like you, I can't think of going away with you—and as much as I hate my guardian, I must take leave of him a little handsomely, or he will kill me, so he will.

Belv. But, dear Mis Peggy, think of your situation; if we don't make the best use of this opportunity, we never may have another.

Peg. Ay, but, Mr Belville—I am as good as married already—my guardian has contracted me, and there wants nothing but church ceremony to make us one—I call him husband, and he calls me wife already: he made me do so;—and we had been married in church long ago, if the writings could have been finished.

Belv. That's his deceit, my sweet creature—He pretends to have married you, for fear of your liking any body else—You have a right to chuse for yourself, and there is no law in Heaven or earth that binds you before marriage to a man you cannot like.

Peg. I'feck, no more I believe it does; sister Althea's maid has told me as much—she's a very sensible girl.

Belv. You are in the very jaws of perdition, and nothing but running away can avoid it——the law will finish your chains to-morrow, and the church will rivet them the day after——Let us secure our happiness by escape, and love and fortune will do the rest for us.

Peg. These are fine sayings, to be sure, Mr Belville; but how shall we get my fortune out of Bud's clutches? We must be a little cunning; 'tis worth trying for—We can at any time run away without it.

Belv. I see by your fears, my dear Peggy, that you live in awe of this brutal guardian; and if he has you once more in his possession, both you and your fortune are secured to him for ever.

Peg. Ay, but it sha'n't though—I thank him for that.

Belv. If you marry without his consent, he can but seize upon half your fortune—The other half, and a younger brother's fortune, with a treasure of love, are

our own—Take it, my sweetest Peggy, and this moment, or we shall be divided for ever.

[*Kneels, and presses her Hand.*

Peg. I'fackins, but we won't—Your fine talk has bewitched me.

Belv. 'Tis you have bewitched me—thou dear, enchanting, sweet simplicity——Let us fly with the wings of love to my house there, and we shall be safe for ever.

Peg. And so we will then—there, squeeze me again by the hand; now run away with me, and if my guardy follows us, the devil take the hindmost, I say. [*Going.*] Boo! here he is.

Enter MOODY, *hastily, and meets them.*

Belv. Curst fortune!

Moody. O! there's my strayed sheep, and the wolf again, in sheep's clothing! Now I have recovered her, I shall come to my senses again. Where have you been, you puppy?

Peg. Been, Bud?—We have been hunting all over the Park to find you.

Belv. From one end to the other, sir. [*Confusedly.*

Moody. But not where I was to be found, you young devil you. Why did you start when you saw me?

Peg. I'm always frightened when I see you, and if I did not love you so well—I should run away from you, so I should. [*Pouting.*

Moody. But I'll take care you don't.

Peg. This gentleman has a favour to beg of you, Bud. [BELVILLE *makes signs of dislike.*

Moody. I am not in the humour to grant favours to young gentlemen, though you may. What have you been doing with this young lady?—gentleman, I would say—Blisters on my tongue!

Peg. Fie, Bud, you have told all.

Belv. I have been as civil as I could to the young stranger; and, if you'll permit me, I will take the

trouble off your hands, and show the young spark Rosamond's pond, for he has not seen it yet—Come, pretty youth, will you go with me?

Peg. As my guardian pleases.

Moody. No, no, it does not please me—whatever I think he ought to see, I shall show him myself—You may visit Rosamond's pond, if you will—and the bottom of it if you will—And so, sir, your humble servant.

[*Exeunt* MOODY, *with* PEGGY *under his arm.* —BELVILLE *a contrary way.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

MOODY'S *House.*

Enter LUCY *and* ALITHEA.

Lucy. Well, madam, now I have dressed you, and set you out with so many ornaments, and spent so much time upon you, and all this for no other purpose but to bury you alive; for I look upon Mr Sparkish's bed to be little better than a grave.

Alith. Hold your peace.

Lucy. Nay, madam, I will ask you the reason why you would banish poor Mr Harcourt for ever from your sight? how could you be so hard-hearted?

Alith. 'Twas because I was not hard-hearted.

Lucy. No, no; 'twas stark love and kindness, I warrant.

Alith. It was so; I would see him no more, because I love him.

Lucy. Hey-day! a very pretty reason!

Alith. You do not understand me.

Lucy. I wish you may yourself.

Alith. I was engaged to marry, you see, another man, whom my justice will not suffer me to deceive, or injure.

Lucy. Can there be a greater cheat or wrong done to a man, than to give him your person without your heart? I should make a conscience of it.

Alith. I'll retrieve it for him after I am married.

Lucy. The woman, that marries to love better, will be as much mistaken, as the rake that marries to live better.

Alith. What nonsense you talk!

Lucy. 'Tis a melancholy truth, madam,—marrying to increase love, is like gaming to become rich—— Alas! you only lose what little stock you had before. ——There are many woeful examples of it in this righteous town!

Alith. I find by your rhetoric you have been bribed to betray me.

Lucy. Only by his merit, that has bribed your heart, you see, against your word and rigid honour.

Alith. Come, pray talk no more of honour, nor Mr Harcourt; I wish the other would come to secure my fidelity to him, and his right in me.

Lucy. You will marry him then?

Alith. Certainly.

Lucy. Well, I wish I may never stick a pin more if he be not an arrant natural to t'other fine gentleman.

Alith. I own he wants the wit of Harcourt.

Lucy. Lord, madam, what should you do with a fool to your husband? you intend to be honest, don't you?

Alith. He only, that could suspect my virtue, should have cause to do it; 'tis Sparkish's confidence in my truth that obliges me to be faithful to him.

Lucy. What, faithful to a creature who is incapable of loving and esteeming you as he ought! To throw away your beauty, wit, accomplishments, sweet temper——

Alith. Hold your tongue.

Lucy. That you know I can't do, madam; and upon this occasion, I will talk for ever—What, give yourself away to one, that poor I, your maid, would not accept of?

Alith. How, Lucy!

Lucy. I would not, upon my honour, madam; 'tis never too late to repent—'Take a man, and give up your coxcomb, I say.

Enter HARRY.

Harry. Mr Sparkish, with company, madam, attends you below.

Alith. I will wait upon them. [*Exit* HARRY.] My heart begins to fail me, but I must go through with it. Go with me, Lucy. [*Exit.*

Lucy. Not I, indeed, madam——If you will leap the precipice, you shall fall by yourself—What excellent advice have I thrown away!—So I'll e'en take it where it will be more welcome.——Miss Peggy is bent upon mischief against her guardian, and she can't have a better privy counsellor than myself—I must be busy one way or another. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

A Chamber in MOODY'S *House.*

Enter MOODY *and* PEGGY.

Moody. I saw him kiss your hand before you saw

me. This pretence of liking my sister was all a blind —the young abandoned hypocrite! [*Aside.*] Tell me, I say, for I know he likes you, and was hurrying you to his house—tell me, I say——

Peg. Lord, ha'n't I told it a hundred times over?

Moody. I would try if, in the repetition of the ungrateful tale, I could find her altering it in the least circumstance; for if her story be false, she is so too. [*Aside.*] Come, how was't, baggage?

Peg. Lord, what a pleasure you take to hear it, sure!

Moody. No, you take more in telling it, I find; but speak, how was't? No lies—I saw him kiss you—he kissed you before my face.

Peg. Nay, you need not be so angry with him neither; for, to say the truth, he has the sweetest breath I ever knew.

Moody. The devil!—you were satisfied with it then, and would do it again?——

Peg. Not unless he should force me.

Moody. Force you, changeling!

Peg. If I had struggled too much, you know—he would have known I had been a woman; so I was quiet, for fear of being found out.

Moody. If you had been in petticoats then, you would have knocked him down?

Peg. With what, Bud?——I could not help myself—besides, he did it so modestly, and blushed so—that I almost thought him a girl in men's clothes, and upon his mummery too, as well as me—and if so, there was no harm done, you know.

Moody. This is worse and worse—so 'tis plain she loves him, but as yet she has not art enough to conceal it from me. O, Love, Love! 'twas he gave women first their craft, their art of deluding. Out of Nature's hands they came plain, open, silly, and fit for slaves, as she and heaven intended 'em, but damn'd Love!—well, I must strangle that little monster, while

I can deal with him. [*Aside.*] Go, fetch pen, ink, and paper, out of the next room.

Peg. Yes, I will, Bud. What's the matter now? [*Aside.*

Moody. Well, why don't you go?

Peg. I'm going. [*Sits at the Table.*

Moody. Is that the way you go?

Peg. Well, I'm going.

Moody. Go, hussey! Go directly, go! [*Exit* PEGGY.

Moody. This young fellow loves her, and she loves him—But I'll crush this mischief in the shell—Why should women have more invention in love than men? It can only be, because they have more desire, more soliciting passions, more of the devil.

Enter PEGGY, *with pen, ink, and paper.*

Come, minx, sit down and write.

Peg. Ay, dear, dear Bud; but I can't do it very well.

Moody. I wish you could not at all.

Peg. But what should I write for?

Moody. I'll have you write a letter to this young man.

Peg. O Lord, a letter to the young gentleman!

Moody. Yes, to the young gentleman.

Peg. Lord, you do but jeer: sure you jest?

Moody. I am not so merry; come, sit down, and write as I bid you.

Peg. What, do you think I am a fool?

Moody. She's afraid I would not dictate any love to him, therefore she's unwilling. [*Aside.*] But you had best begin.

Peg. Indeed and indeed but I won't, so I won't.

Moody. Why?

Peg. Because he's in town: you may send for him here, if you will.

Moody. Very well, you would have him brought to

you?—is it come to this? I say, take the pen and ink and write, or you'll provoke me.

Peg. Lord, what do you make a fool of me for? Don't I know that letters are never writ but from the country to London, and from London into the country? now he's in town, and I am in town too; therefore I can't write to him, you know.

Moody. So, I am glad it is no worse; she's innocent enough yet. [*Aside.*] Yes, you may, when your husband bids, write letters to people who are in town.

Peg. O may I so! then I am satisfied.

Moody. Come begin—*Sir*— [*Dictates.*

Peg. Sha'n't I say, *dear Sir?* you know one says always something more than bare *Sir* up in a corner.

Moody. Write as I bid you, or I will write something with this in your face.

Peg. —*Sir*—

Moody. *Though I suffered last night your nauseous loathed kisses and embraces*—Write!

Peg. Nay, why should I say so? you know I told you he had a sweet breath.

Moody. Write!

Peg. Let me put out *loathed.*

Moody. Write! I say.

Peg. Well then. [*Writes.*

Moody. Let me see what you have writ. *Though I suffered last night your kisses and embraces*—[*Reads the paper.*] Thou impudent creature, where is *nauseous* and *loathed?*

Peg. I can't abide to write such filthy words.

Moody. Once more, write as I'd have you and question it not, or I will spoil your writing with this; I will stab out those eyes that cause my mischief.

[*Holds up the penknife.*

Peg. O Lord, I will.

Moody. So—so—let's see now: *Though I suffered last night your nauseous loathed kisses and embraces;* go on,—*yet I would not have you presume that you shall ever repeat them*——so. [*She writes.*

Peg. I have writ it.

Moody. O then—*I then concealed myself from your knowledge, to avoid your insolencies*—— [*She writes.*

Peg. *To avoid*——

Moody. *Your insolencies.*

Peg. *Your insolencies.* [*Writes.*

Moody. *The same reason, now I am out of your hands*——

Peg. So—— [*She writes.*

Moody. *Makes me own to you my unfortunate—though innocent frolic of being in man's clothes.* [*She writes.*

Peg. So——

Moody. *That you may for evermore*——

Peg. *Evermore?*

Moody. *Evermore cease to pursue her who hates and detests you.* [*She writes.*

Peg. So—h. [*Sighs.*

Moody. What do you sigh for?—*detests you—as much as she loves her husband and her honour*—

Peg. I vow, husband, he'll ne'er believe I should write such a letter.

Moody. What, he'd expect a kinder from you? Come, now your name only.

Peg. What, sha'n't I say your most faithful humble servant till death?

Moody. No, tormenting fiend!——Her style, I find, would be very soft. [*Aside.*] Come, wrap it up now, whilst I go fetch wax and a candle; and write on the outside, *For Mr Belville.* [*Exit* MOODY.

Peg. *For Mr Belville*—So—I am glad he is gone —Hark, I hear a noise. [*Goes to the door.*

Moody. [*Without.*] Well, but you must call another time, I tell you.

Peg. [*Goes to the door.*] I'feck there's folk with him —that's pure——now I may think a little——Why should I send dear Mr Belville such a letter?—Can one have no shift? ah! a London woman would have

had a hundred presently——Stay——what if I should write a letter, and wrap it up like this, and write upon it too?——Ay, but then my guardian would see't——I don't know what to do—But yet y'vads I'll try, so I will—for I will not send this letter to poor Mr Belville, come what will on't. [*She writes, and repeats what she writes.*] *Dear, sweet Mr Belville, —so—My guardian would have me send you a base, rude letter, but I won't—so—and would have me say I hate you—but I don't*——there——*for I'm sure, if you and I were in the country at cards together*—so—*I could not help treading on your toe under the table—so pray keep at home, for I shall be with you as soon as I can*——*so no more at present, from me, who am, dear, dear, poor, dear Mr Belville, your loving friend till death, Margaret Thrift.*—So—now wrap it up just like t'other —so—now write, *For Mr Belville*—But oh! what shall I do with it? for here comes my guardian.

[*Puts the Letter in her bosom.*

Enter MOODY, *with a candle and sealing-wax.*

Moody. I have been detained by a sparkish coxcomb, who pretended to visit me, but I fear 'twas to my wife. [*Aside.*] What, have you done?

Peg. Ay, ay, Bud, just now.

Moody. Let's see't; what do you tremble for?——

[*He opens and reads the first Letter.*

Peg. So, I had been finely served, if I had given him this! [*Aside.*

Moody. Come, where's the wax and seal?

Peg. Lord, what shall I do now? nay, then I have it——pray let me see't. Lord, you think me so arrant a fool that I can't seal a letter; I will do't, so I will. [*Snatches the Letter from him, changes it for the other, seals it, and delivers it to him.*

Moody. Nay, I believe you will learn that and other things too, which I would not have you.

Peg. So, ha'n't I done it curiously? I think I have—

—there's my letter going to Mr Belville, since he'll needs have me send letters to folks. [*Aside.*

Moody. 'Tis very well, but I warrant you would not have it go now?

Peg. Yes, indeed, but I would, Bud, now.

Moody. Well, you are a good girl then. Come, let me lock you up in your chamber, till I come back; and be sure you come not within three strides of the window, when I am gone; for I have a spy in the street. [*Puts her into the Chamber.*] At least 'tis fit she thinks so; if we do not cheat women, they'll cheat us.——Now I have secured all within, I'll deal with the foe without, with false intelligence. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

BELVILLE'S *Lodgings.*

Enter LUCY *and* BELVILLE.

Lucy. I run great risks, to be sure, to serve the young lady, and you, sir——but I know you are a gentleman of honour, and would scorn to betray a friend who means you well, and is above being mercenary.

Bel. As you are not mercenary, Mrs Lucy, I ought to be the more generous—give me leave to present you with this trifle, [*Gives a Ring*] not as a reward for your services, but as a small token of friendship.

Lucy. Though I scorn to be bribed in any cause, yet I am proud to accept of it as a mark of your regard, and as such shall keep it for your sake—and now to business.

Belv. But has the dear creature resolved?

Lucy. Has she?—why, she will run away and marry you, in spite of your teeth, the first moment she can

break prison—so you will stay at home till you hear from us.

Belv. Blessings on thee, Lucy, for the thought!

Moody. [*Speaking without.*] But I must and will see him, let him have what company he will.

Lucy. As I hope to be married, Mr Belville, I hear Mr Moody's voice—where shall I hide myself?—if he sees me we are all undone.

Belv. This is our cursed luck again—What the devil can he want here?—Get into this closet till he's gone. [*Puts* Lucy *into the closet.*] This visit means something, I am quite confounded. Don't you stir, Lucy—I must put the best face upon the matter—— Now for it. [*Takes a Book, and reads.*

Enter Moody.

Moody. You will excuse me, sir, for breaking through forms, and your servant's entreaties, to have the honour—but you are alone, sir—your fellow told me below that you were with company.

Belv. Yes, sir, the best company. [*Shows his Book.*] When I converse with my betters, I chuse to have them alone.

Moody. And I chuse to interrupt your conversation! The business of my errand must plead my excuse.

Belv. You shall be always welcome to me; but you seem ruffled, sir; what brings you hither, and so seemingly out of humour?

Moody. Your impertinency—I beg pardon, your modesty, I mean.

Belv. My impertinency!

Moody. Your impertinency.

Belv. Sir, from the peculiarity of your character, and your intimacy with my uncle, I shall allow you great privileges; but you must consider, youth has its privileges too: and as I have not the honour of your

acquaintance, I am not obliged to bear with your ill humours, or your ill manners.

Moody. They who wrong me, young man, must bear with both; and if you had not made too free with me, I should have taken no liberties with you.

Belv. I could have wish'd, sir, to have found you a little more civil, the first time I have the honour of a visit from you.

Moody. Read that, and let your modesty declare whether I want either kindness or civility—Look you there, sir. [*Gives a letter.*

Belv. What is it?

Moody. Only a love-letter, sir;——and from my wife.

Belv. How, is it from your wife?—hum—hum—

[*Reads.*

Moody. Even from my wife, sir; am not I wondrous kind and civil to you now too? But you'll not think her so. [*Aside.*

Belv. Ha! is this a trick of his or hers? [*Aside.*

Moody. The gentleman's surprised, I find: what, you expected a kinder letter?

Belv. No, 'faith, not I, how could I?

Moody. Yes, yes, I'm sure you did; a man so young and well-made as you are, must needs be disappointed, if the women declare not their passion at the first sight or opportunity.

Belv. But what should this mean? It seems he knows not what the letter contains! [*Aside.*

Moody. Come, ne'er wonder at it so much.

Belv. 'Faith, I can't help it.

Moody. Now I think I have deserved your infinite friendship and kindness, and have showed myself sufficiently an obliging kind friend and husband—am I not so, to bring a letter from my wife to her gallant?

Belv. Ay, indeed, you are the most obliging kind friend and husband in the world; ha, ha, ha! Pray,

however, present my humble service to her, and tell her, I will obey her letter to a tittle, and fulfil her desires, be they what they will, or with what difficulty soever I do't; and you shall be no more jealous of me: I warrant her and you.

Moody. Well then, fare you well, and play with any man's honour but mine, kiss any man's wife but mine, and welcome—so, Mr Modesty, your servant.

[*As* MOODY *is going out,*

Enter SPARKISH, *who meets him.*

Spark. So, brother-in-law, that was to have been, I have followed you from home to Belville's: I have strange news for you.

Moody. What, are you wiser than you were this morning?

Spark. 'Faith, I don't know but I am, for I have lost your sister, and I sha'n't eat half an ounce the less at dinner for it; there's philosophy for you!

Moody. Insensibility you mean—I hope you don't mean to use my sister ill, sir?

Spark. No, sir, she has used me ill; she's in her tantrums—I have had a narrow escape, sir.

Moody. If thou art endowed with the smallest portion of understanding, explain this riddle.

Belv. Ay, ay, pr'ythee, Sparkish, condescend to be intelligible.

Spark. Why, you must know, we had settled to be married—it is the same thing to me, whether I am married or not—I have no particular fancy one way or other, and so I told your sister; off or on, 'tis the same thing to me; but the thing was fixed, you know—You and my aunt brought it about—I had no hand in it. And, to show you that I was as willing to marry your sister as any other woman, I suffered the law to tie me up to hard terms, and the church would have finished me still to harder—but she was taken with her tantrums!

Moody. Damn your tantrums—come to the point.

Spark. Your sister took an aversion to the parson, Frank Harcourt's brother—abused him like a pick-pocket, and swore 'twas Harcourt himself.

Moody. And so it was, for I saw him.

Spark. Why, you are as mad as your sister—I tell you it was Ned, Frank's twin brother.

Moody. What, Frank told you so?

Spark. Ay, and Ned too——they were both in a story.

Moody. What an incorrigible fellow!——Come, come, I must begone.

Spark. Nay, nay, you shall hear my story out.—She walked up within pistol-shot of the church—then twirled round upon her heel—called me every name she could think of; and when she had exhausted her imagination, and tired her tongue—no easy matter, let me tell you—she called her chair, sent her foot-man to buy her a monkey before my face, then bid me good-morrow with a sneer, and left us with our mouths open, in the middle of a hundred people, who were all laughing at us! If these are not tantrums, I don't know what are.

Moody. Ha, ha, ha! I thank thee, Sparkish, from my soul: 'tis a most exquisite story; I have not had such a laugh for this half year—Thou art a most ridiculous puppy, and I am infinitely obliged to thee; ha, ha, ha! [*Exit* MOODY.

Spark. Did you ever hear the like, Belville?

Belv. O yes; how is it possible to hear such a foolish story, and see thy foolish face, and not laugh at them? ha, ha, ha! [LUCY *in the Closet laughs.*

Spark. Hey-day! what's that? What, have you raised a devil in the closet, to make up a laughing chorus at me? I must take a peep——

[*Going to the Closet.*

Belv. Indeed but you must not.

Spark. 'Twas a woman's voice.

Belv. So much the better for me.

Spark. Pr'ythee, introduce me.

Belv. Though you take a pleasure in exposing your ladies, I chuse to conceal mine. So, my dear Sparkish, lest the lady should be sick by too long a confinement, and laughing heartly at you, I must entreat you to withdraw—Pr'ythee, excuse me, I must laugh—ha, ha, ha!

Spark. Do you know that I begin to be angry, Belville?

Belv. I can't help that; ha, ha, ha!

Spark. My character's at stake—I shall be thought a damned silly fellow—I will call Alithea to an account directly. [*Exit.*

Belv. Ha, ha, ha!

Lucy. [*Peeping out.*] Ha, ha, ha! O dear sir, let me have my laugh out, or I shall burst—What an adventure! [*Laughs.*

Belv. My sweet Peggy has sent me the kindest letter—and by the dragon himself—There's a spirit for you!

Lucy. There's simplicity for you! Show me a town-bred girl with half the genius—Send you a love-letter, and by a jealous guardian too! ha, ha, ha!—'Tis too much, too much.—Well, Mr Belville—the world goes as it should do—my mistress will exchange her fool for a wit; Miss Peggy her brute for a pretty young fellow; I shall dance at two weddings—be well rewarded by both parties—get a husband myself, and be as happy as the best of you—and so your humble servant. [*Exit.*

Belv. Success attend you, Lucy! [*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

MOODY'S *House.*

PEGGY *alone, leaning on her elbow. A Table, Pen, Ink, and Paper.*

Peg. Well 'tis e'en so, I have got the London disease they call love; I am sick of my guardian, and dying for Mr Belville! therefore I'll make an end of my letter to him, which shall be a finer letter than my last, because I have studied it like any thing. Oh! sick, sick!

Enter MOODY, *who, seeing her writing, steals softly behind her, and, looking over her Shoulder, snatches the Paper from her.*

Moody. What, writing more letters?

Peg. O Lord! Oh dear!

[*She offers to run out, he stops her, and reads.*

Moody. How's this! nay, you shall not stir, madam. *Dear, dear, dear Mr Belville,*—very well, I have taught you to write letters to good purpose—— but let's see't.—[*Reads.*] *First, I am to beg your pardon for my boldness in writing to you, which I'd have you to know I would not have done, had you not said first you loved me so extremely; which, if you do, you will never suffer me to be another man's, whom I loath, nauseate, and detest:* (Now you can write these filthy words,)—But what follows?—*therefore, I hope you*

will speedily find some way to free me from this unfortunate match, which was never, I assure you, of my choice, but I'm afraid 'tis already too far gone; however, if you love me, as I do you, you will try what you can do; you must help me away before to-morrow, or else, alas! I shall be for ever out of your reach; for I can defer no longer our—our—What is to follow *our?*—speak what—our journey into the country, I suppose.——Oh, woman, damned woman! and Love, their old tempter, for this is one of his miracles; in a moment he can make those blind that could see, and those see that were blind; those dumb that could speak, and those prattle who were dumb before. But make an end of your letter, and then I'll make an end of you thus, and all my plagues together.

[*Draws his Sword.*

Peg. O Lord! O Lord! you are such a passionate man, Bud!

Moody. Come, take the pen, and make an end of the letter, just as you intended; if you are false in a tittle, I shall soon perceive it, and punish you with this, as you deserve. [*Lays his Hand on his Sword.*] Write what was to follow—let's see—*You must make haste, and help me away before to-morrow, or else I shall be for ever out of your reach; for I can defer no longer our*—What follows *our?*——

[PEGGY *takes the pen and writes.*

Peg. Must all out then, Bud?——Look you there then.

Moody. Let's see——*for I can defer no longer our wedding*——*Your slighted* ALITHEA.——What's the meaning of this; my sister's name to't? speak, unriddle.

Peg. Yes, indeed, Bud.

Moody. But why her name to't? speak, speak, I say.

Peg. Ay, but you'll tell her again: if you would not tell her again——

Moody. I will not; I am stunned, my head turns round. Speak.

Peg. Won't you tell her indeed, and indeed?

Moody. No; speak, I say.

Peg. She'll be angry with me, but I had rather she should be angry with me than you, Bud. And, to tell you the truth, 'twas she made me write the letter, and taught me what I should write.

Moody. Ha!—I thought the style was somewhat better than her own. [*Aside.*] How could she come to you to teach you, since I had locked you up alone?

Peg. Oh, through the key-hole, Bud.

Moody. But why should she make you write a letter for her to him, since she can write herself?

Peg. Why, she said because——because——

Moody. Because, what——because—

Peg. Because, lest Mr Belville, as he was so young, should be inconstant, and refuse her, or be vain afterwards; and show the letter, she might disown it, the hand not being hers.

Moody. Belville again!—Am I to be deceived again with that young hypocrite?

Peg. You have deceived yourself, Bud, you have indeed—— I have kept the secret, for my sister's sake, as long as I could——but you must know it——and shall know it too. [*Cries.*

Moody. Dry your eyes.

Peg. You always thought he was hankering after me—Good law! he's dying for Alithea, and Alithea for him—they have had private meetings—and he was making love to her, before yesterday, from the tavern window, when you thought it was me——I would have discovered all—but she made me swear to deceive you, and so I have finely—have not I, Bud?

Moody. Why did you write that foolish letter to him then, and make me more foolish to carry it?

Peg. To carry on the joke, Bud—to oblige them.

Moody. And will nothing serve her but that taper

jackanapes, that great baby?—he's too young for her to marry.

Peg. Why do you marry me then? 'tis the same thing, Bud.

Moody. No, no, 'tis quite different—How innocent she is!—This changeling could not invent this lie; but if she could, why should she? she might think I should soon discover it. [*Aside.*] But hark you, madam, your sister went out in the morning, and I have not seen her within since.

Peg. Alack-a-day! she has been crying all day above, it seems, in a corner, with her face to the wall.

Moody. Where is she? let me speak with her.

Peg. O Lord! then she'll discover all! [*Aside.*] Pray hold, Bud; what, d'ye mean to discover me?—she'll know I have told you then. Pray, Bud, let me talk with her first.

Moody. I must speak with her, to know whether Belville ever made her any promise, and whether she will be married to Sparkish or no.

Peg. Pray, dear Bud, don't, till I have spoken with her, and told her that I have told you all; for she'll kill me else.

Moody. Go then, and bid her come to me.

Peg. Yes, yes, Bud.

Moody. Let me see——

Peg. I have just time to know of Lucy, who first set me to work, what lie I shall tell next; for I am e'en at my wit's end. [*Aside, and exit.*

Moody. Well, I resolve it, Belville shall have her: I'd rather give him my sister, than lend him my wife; and such an alliance will prevent his pretensions to my wife, sure—I'll make him of kin to her, and then he won't care for her.

Enter PEGGY.

Peg. O Lord, Bud, I told you what anger you would make me with my sister.

Moody. Won't she come hither?

Peg. No, she won't: she's ashamed to look you in the face. She'll go directly to Mr Belville; she says she must speak to him before she discovers all to you, or even sees you—she says too, that you shall know the reason by and bye. Pray let her have her way, Bud—she won't be pacified if you don't—and will never forgive me—For my part, Bud, I believe, but don't tell any body, they have broken a piece of silver between them—or have contracted one another, as we have done, you know, which is the next thing to being married.

Moody. Pooh! you fool——she is ashamed of talking with me about Belville, because I made the match for her with Sparkish. But Sparkish is a fool, and I have no objection to Belville's family or fortune——tell her so.

Peg. I will, Bud. [*Going.*

Moody. Stay, stay, Peggy—let her have her own way—she shall go to Belville herself, and I'll follow her——that will be best——let her have her whim.

Peg. You're in the right, Bud——for they have certainly had a quarrel, by her crying and hanging her head so——I'll be hanged if her eyes an't swelled out of her head, she's in such a piteous taking.

Moody. Belville sha'n't use her ill, I'll take care of that—if he has made her a promise, he shall keep to it—but she had better go first—I will follow her at a distance, that she may have no interruption: and I will wait in the Park before I see them, that they may come to a reconciliation before I come upon them.

Peg. La, Bud, how wise you are! I wish I had half your wisdom; you see every thing at once——Stand o' one side then, and I'll tell her you are gone to your room, and when she passes by, you may follow her.

Moody. And so I will—she sha'n't see me till I break in upon her at Belville's.

Peg. Now for it; Alithea has left her pelisse, bonnet, and veil. I'll slip them on. [*Exit* PEGGY.

Moody. My case is something better—for, suppose the worst—should Belville use her ill—I had rather fight him for not marrying my sister, than for debauching my wife, for I will make her mine absolutely to-morrow; and, of the two, I had rather find my sister too forward than my wife. Well, wife and sister are names which make us expect love and duty, pleasure and comfort; but we find them plagues and torments, and are equally, though differently, troublesome to their keeper—but here she comes.

[*Steps on one side.*

Enter PEGGY, *dressed like* ALITHEA; *and as she passes over the Stage, seems to sigh, sob, and wipe her eyes.*

Peg. Heigho! [*Exit.*

Moody. [*Comes forward.*] There the poor devil goes, sighing and sobbing; a woeful example of the fatal consequences of a town education—but I am bound, in duty, as well as in inclination, to do my utmost to save her—but first I'll secure my own property.—[*Opens the Door, and calls.*] Peggy! Peggy!—my dear!—I will return as soon as possible—Do you hear me? Why don't you answer? You may read in the book I bought you till I come back—As the Jew says in the play, "Fast bind, fast find." [*Locks the Door.*] This is the best and only security of female affections. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Park before BELVILLE'S *Door.*

Enter SPARKISH, *drunk.*

Spark. If I can but meet with her, or any body that belongs to her, they will find me a match for them—When a man has wit, and a great deal of it, champagne gives it a double edge, and nothing can withstand it—'tis a lighted match to gunpowder—— the mine is sprung, and the poor devils are toss'd heels uppermost in an instant. I was right to consult my friends, and they all agree with Moody, that I make a damned ridiculous figure, as matters stand at present. I'll consult Belville—this is his house—he's my friend too—and no fool. It shall be so—damn it, I must not be ridiculous. [*Going to the Door, sees* PEGGY *coming.*] Hold! hold! if the champagne does not burst my eyesight, while it sharpens my wit, the enemy is marching up this way.—Come on, madam Alithea; now for a smart fire, and then let's see who will be ridiculous.

Enter PEGGY.

Peg. Dear me, I begin to tremble—there is Mr Sparkish, and I can't get to Mr Belville's house without passing him—he sees me—and will discover me—he seems in liquor too!—bless me!

Spark. Oho! she stands at bay a little—she don't much relish the engagement. The first blow is half the battle. I'll be a little figurative with her. [*Approaching her.*] I find, madam, you like a solo better than a duet. You need not have been walking alone this evening, if you had been wiser yesterday—What,

nothing to say for yourself? Repentance, I suppose, makes you as awkward and as foolish as the poor country girl your brother has locked up in Pall-Mall.

Peg. I'm frightened out of my wits.

[*Tries to pass by him.*

Spark. Not a step farther shall you go, till you give me an account of your behaviour, and make me reparation for being ridiculous. What, dumb still—then, if you won't by fair means, I must squeeze you to a confession. [*As he goes to seize her, she slips by him; but he catches hold of her before she reaches* BELVILLE'S *Door.*] Not quite so fast, if you please. Come, come, let me see your modest face, and hear your soft tongue, or I shall be tempted to use you ill.

Enter MOODY.

Moody. Hands off, you ruffian—how dare you use a lady, and my sister, in this manner?

[MOODY *takes her from* SPARKISH.

Spark. She's my property, sir—transferred to me by you—and though I would give her up to any body for a dirty sword-knot, yet I won't be bullied out of my right, though it is not worth that——

[*Snaps his Fingers.*

Moody. There's a fellow to be a husband——you are justified in despising him and flying from him—I'll defend you with my purse and my sword ——knock at the door, and let me speak with Belville.——[PEGGY *knocks at the Door: when* JOHN *opens it, she runs in.*]—Is your master at home, friend?

John. Yes, sir.

Moody. Tell him then that I have rescued that lady from this gentleman, and that, by her desire, and my consent, she flies to him for protection; if he can get a parson, let him marry her this minute; tell him so, and shut the door. [*Exit* JOHN.] And now, sir, if your wine has given you courage, you had better

show it upon this occasion, for you are still damned ridiculous.

Spark. Did you ever hear the like!——Look ye, Mr Moody, you may vapour as long as you please. A woman of so little taste is not worth fighting for—she's not worth my sword! but if you'll fight me to-morrow morning for diversion, I am your man.

Moody. Relinquish your title in the lady to Belville peaceably, and you may sleep in a whole skin.

Spark. Belville! he would not have your sister with the fortune of a nabob; no, no, his mouth waters at your country tit-bit at home—much good may it do him.

Moody. And you think so, puppy—ha, ha, ha!

Spark. Yes, I do, mastiff—ha, ha, ha!

Moody. Then thy folly is complete—ha, ha, ha!

Spark. Thine will be so, when thou hast married thy country innocence—ha, ha, ha!

[*They laugh at each other.*

Enter HARCOURT.

Spark. What, my boy, Harcourt!

Moody. What brings you here, sir?

Harc. I followed you to Belville's, to present a near relation of yours, and a nearer one of mine, to you.

[*Exit.*

Spark. What's the matter now?

Enter HARCOURT *with* ALITHEA.

Harc. Give me leave, gentlemen, without offence to either, to present Mrs Harcourt to you!

Spark. Alithea! your wife!——Mr Moody, are you in the clouds too?

Moody. If I am not in a dream—I am the most miserable waking dog that ever ran mad with his misfortunes and astonishment!

Harc. Why so, Jack?—can you object to my happiness, when this gentleman was unworthy of it?

[MOODY *walks about in a rage.*

Spark. This is very fine, very fine indeed—where's your story about Belville now, 'Squire Moody! Pr'ythee don't chafe and stare and stride, and beat thy head, like a mad tragedy poet, but out with thy tropes and figures.

Moody. Zounds! I can't bear it.

[*Goes hastily to* BELVILLE'S *Door, and knocks hard.*

Alith. Dear brother, what's the matter?

Moody. The devil's the matter! the devil and woman together. [*Knocks again.*] I'll break the door down if they won't answer. [*Knocks again.*

JOHN *appears in the Balcony.*

John. What would your honour please to have?

Moody. Your master, rascal!

John. He is obeying your commands, sir, and the moment he has finished, he will do himself the pleasure to wait on you.

Moody. You sneering villain you—if your master does not produce that she-devil, who is now with him, and who, with a face of innocence, has cheated and undone me, I'll set fire to his house. [*Exit* JOHN.

Spark. Gad so! now I begin to smoke the business. Well said, simplicity! rural simplicity! Egad! if thou hast tricked Cerberus here, I shall be so ravished, that I will give this couple a wedding dinner.—Pray, Mr Moody, who's damned ridiculous now?

Moody. [*Going to* SPARKISH.] Look ye, sir—don't grin, for if you dare to show your teeth at my misfortunes, I'll dash them down your impudent throat, you jackanapes.

Spark. [*Quite calm.*] Very fine, 'faith—but I have no weapons to butt with a mad bull, so you may toss and roar by yourself, if you please.

BELVILLE *apears in the Balcony.*

Belv. What does my good friend want with me?
Moody. Are you a villain, or are you not?
Belv. I have obeyed your commands, sir.
Moody. What have you done with the girl, sir?
Belv. Made her my wife, as you desired.
Spark. Very true, I am your witness——
Moody. She's my wife, and I demand her.

PEGGY *appears in the Balcony.*

Peg. No, but I ar'n't——What's the matter, Bud, are you angry with me?

Moody. How dare you look me in the face, cockatrice?

Peg. How dare you look me in the face, Bud? Have you not given me to another, when you ought to have married me yourself? Have not you pretended to be married to me, when you knew in your conscience you was not?—And have not you been shilly shally for a long time? So that if I had not married poor dear Mr Belville, I should not have married at all—so I should not.

[BELVILLE *and* PEGGY *retire from the Balcony.*

Spark. Extremely pleasant, faith; ha, ha, ha!

Moody. I am stupified with shame, rage, and astonishment, my fate has overcome me. I can struggle no more with it. [*Sighs.*] I will hurry down to my old house, take a twelvemonths provision into it——cut down my draw-bridge, run wild about my garden, which shall grow as wild as myself——then will I curse the world and every individual in it—and, when my rage and spirits fail me, I will be found dead among the nettles and thistles, a woeful example of the baseness and treachery of one sex, and of the falsehood, lying, perjury, deceit, impudence, and—damnation of the other. [*Exit.*

Spark. Very droll, and extravagantly comic, I must confess; ha, ha, ha!

Enter BELVILLE *and* PEGGY.

Look ye, Belville, I wish you joy, with all my heart—you have got the prize, and perhaps have caught a Tartar—that's no business of mine.——If you want evidence for Mr Moody's giving his consent to your marriage, I shall be ready. I bear no ill-will to that pair. I wish you happy—[*To* ALITHEA *and* HARCOURT.] —though I'm sure they'll be miserable—and so your humble servant. [*Exit.*

Peg. I hope you forgive me, Alithea, for playing your brother this trick; indeed I should have only made him and myself miserable, had we married together.

Alith. Then 'tis much better as it is.—But I am yet in the dark how this matter has been brought about; how your innocence, my dear, has outwitted his worldly wisdom.

Peg. I am sure I'll do any thing to please my Bud, but marry him.

PEGGY *comes forward, and addresses the Audience.*

But you, good gentry, what say you to this?
You are to judge me—have I done amiss?
I've reasons will convince you all, and strong ones;
Except old folks, who hanker after young ones:
Bud was so passionate, and grown so thrifty,
'Twas a sad life;——and then he was near fifty!
I'm but nineteen—my husband too is young,
So soft, so gentle, such a winning tongue!
Have I,—pray, ladies, speak,—done very wrong?
As for poor Bud, 'twas honest to deceive him!
More virtuous sure, to cheat him, than to grieve him.
Great folks, I know, will call me simple slut,
"Marry for love!" they cry, "the country put!"

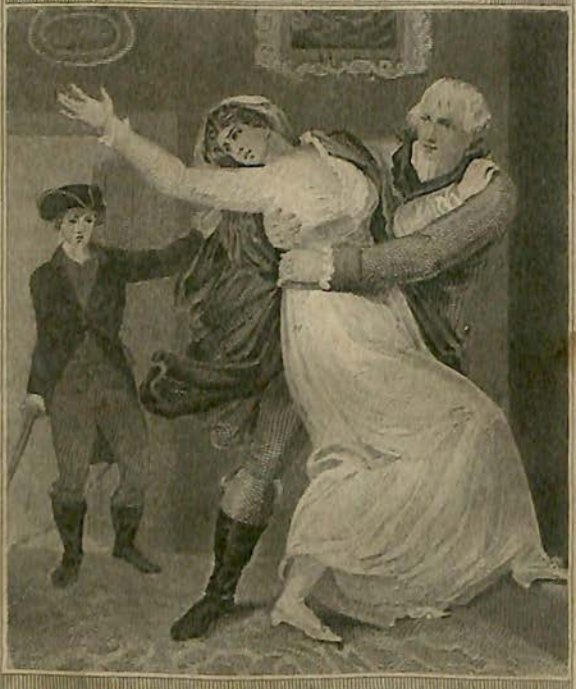
Marriage with them's a fashion—soon grows cool:
But I'm for loving always, like a fool.
With half my fortune I would rather part,
Than be all finery, with an aching heart:
For these strange awkward notions don't abuse me,
And, as I know no better, pray excuse me.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

THE END.

LILLIAN
GYTHE
BOMB
DU
GYTHE

JEALOUS WIFE.



HARRIET.—HELP! MURDER! HELP! HELP!

Painted by J. Woodforde. Published by Longman & C.º March 1806 Engraved by C. Heath.

THE

JEALOUS WIFE;

A COMEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

By GEORGE COLMAN, Esq.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE AND COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN,
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REMARKS.

This comedy, by Colman the elder, was written in his youth; and, though he brought upon the stage no less than twenty-five dramas, including those he altered from Shakspeare and other writers, subsequent to this production, yet not one of them was ever so well received by the town, or appears to have deserved so well, as "The Jealous Wife."

To this observation, "The Clandestine Marriage" may possibly be an exception; but, in that work, Mr. Garrick was declared his joint labourer. It therefore appears, that Mr. Colman's talents for dramatic writing declined, rather than improved, by experience—or, at least, his ardour abated; and all works of imagination require, both in conception and execution, a degree of enthusiasm.

The reader of this comedy will perceive, that its fable is taken from Fielding's celebrated novel of "Tom Jones;" commencing at the period, when Sophia takes refuge in Lady Bellaston's house. But those characters, which, in the novel, constitute the great interest of the book, are, in the comedy, made

subservient to persons of more theatrical consequence; and Western, his daughter, and Tom Jones himself, (in the parts of Russet, Harriet, and Charles Oakly) give place to their dramatic superiors, Mr. Mrs. and Major Oakly.

Though Mr. Colman has here made the creatures of his own fancy transcend those formed by the great novelist; yet, had Fielding dramatised his own romance, it is almost certain he would not have done those very characters the honour paid to them in "The Jealous Wife."

With all his genius as a writer, Fielding was always unsuccessful in writing for the stage. Those of his dramas, which survived the perils of the first night, generally expired in the course of a week; and they would now be wholly forgotten, but for the importance of the author's name.

Besides his acknowledgment to the author of "Tom Jones," Mr. Colman confessed himself obliged, for some incidents in this play, or ideas that formed them, to "The Spectator," "Connoisseur," and "The Adelphi" of Terence.

He says also, in his advertisement, prefixed to the original publication,—"It would be unjust to omit mentioning my obligations to Mr. Garrick."

He proceeds to state, that Garrick, to whom he submitted the play for inspection in its first "rude state," gave him advice in many particulars, as to its fable and characters. From this simple admission, perhaps, the suggestion came, however erroneous, that Garrick wrote, or conceived, the part

of Major Oakly. But the very scrupulous delicacy with which the author has owned his various and minute aids, is a convincing argument that he received no other assistance than that which he has mentioned.

Thus candidly, in the following lines of an excellent prologue, written by the poet Lloyd, and spoken by Garrick, Mr. Colman shows not the least inclination to take applause to himself, without having fairly earned it:

" Books he [*the author*] has read, nor blush'd to
use their store——
" He does but what his betters did before.
" Shakspeare has done it, and the Grecian stage
" Caught truth of character from Homer's page.

" If in his scenes an honest skill is shown,
" And borrowing little, much appears his own—"

This supposition was, in proof, a fact—and that *much* which belonged to himself, was by far the highest entertainment of the evening. Mrs. Oakly is, indeed, so complete a character from life, and so ably adapted to the stage by the genius of the writer, that, performed by an actress possessed of proper abilities for the part, the play might be well supported, were the wit, humour, and repartee, of every other character in the piece, annihilated.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	DRURY LANE.	COVENT GARDEN.
OAKLY	*Mr. Wroughton.*	*Mr. Young.*
MAJOR OAKLY	*Mr. Palmer.*	*Mr. Terry.*
CHARLES	*Mr. Bartley.*	*Mr. C. Kemble.*
RUSSET	*Mr. Dowton.*	*Mr. Blanchard.*
SIR HARRY BEAGLE	*Mr. Bannister.*	*Mr. Fawcett.*
LORD TRINKET	*Mr. De Camp.*	*Mr. Jones.*
CAPTAIN O'CUTTER	*Mr. Johnstone.*	*Mr. Tokely.*
PARIS	*Mr. Wewitzer.*	*Mr. Menage.*
WILLIAM	*Mr. Fisher.*	*Mr. Jefferies.*
JOHN	*Mr. Maddocks.*	*Mr. Sarjant.*
TOM	*Mr. Purser.*	*Mr. Atkins.*
SERVANT	*Mr. Webb.*	*Mr. Louis.*
MRS. OAKLY	*Miss Duncan.*	*Miss O'Neill.*
LADY FREELOVE	*Mrs. Sparks.*	*Mrs. Gibbs.*
HARRIET	*Miss Mellon.*	*Miss Foote.*
TOILET	*Miss Tidswell.*	*Miss Logan.*
CHAMBERMAID	*Mrs. Saunders.*	*Mrs. Davies.*

SCENE,—London.

THE

JEALOUS WIFE.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

A Room in OAKLY'S *House.*

Noise heard within.

Mrs. Oak. [*Within.*] Don't tell me—I know it is so—It's monstrous, and I will not bear it.

Oak. [*Within.*] But, my dear!——

Mrs. Oak. Nay, nay, &c. [*Squabbling within.*

Enter MRS. OAKLY, *with a Letter,* OAKLY *following.*

Mrs. Oak. Say what you will, Mr. Oakly, you shall never persuade me, but this is some filthy intrigue of yours.

Oak. I can assure you, my love——

Mrs. Oak. Your love!—Don't I know your—Tell me—

Oak. How can I tell you, when you will not so much as let me see it?

Mrs. Oak. Look you, Mr. Oakly, this usage is not to be borne. You take a pleasure in abusing my tenderness, and soft disposition.—To be perpetdally running over the whole town, nay, the whole kingdom too, in pursuit of your amours!—Did not I dis-

cover, that you was great with mademoiselle, my own woman?—Did not you contract a shameful familiarity with Mrs. Freeman?—Did not I detect your intrigue with Lady Wealthy?—Was not you——

Oak. Oons! madam, the Grand Turk himself has not half so many mistresses—You throw me out of all patience—Do I know any body but our common friends?—Am I visited by any body, that does not visit you?—Do I ever go out, unless you go with me?—And am I not as constantly by your side, as if I was tied to your apron-strings?

Mrs. Oak. Go, go, you are a false man—Have not I found you out a thousand times? And have not I this moment a letter in my hand, which convinces me of your baseness?——Let me know the whole affair, or I will——

Oak. Let you know? Let me know what you would have of me——You stop my letter before it comes to my hands, and then expect that I should know the contents of it!

Mrs. Oak. Heaven be praised, I stopped it!—I suspected some of these doings for some time past —But the letter informs me who she is, and I'll be revenged on her sufficiently. Oh, you base man, you!

Oak. For heaven's sake, my dear, moderate your passion!—Show me the letter, and I'll convince you of my innocence.

Mrs. Oak. Innocence!—Abominable!—Innocence! But I am not to be made such a fool—I am not to be abused and imposed on—I am convinc'd of your perfidy, and very sure that——

Oak. 'Sdeath and fire! your passion hurries you out of your senses——Will you hear me?

Mrs. Oak. No, you are a base man: and I will not hear you.

Oak. Why then, my dear, since you will neither talk reasonably yourself, nor listen to reason from me,

I shall take my leave till you are in a better humour. So, your servant! [*Going.*

Mrs. Oak. Ay, go, you cruel man!——Go to your mistresses, and leave your poor wife to her miseries. ——How unfortunate a woman am I!—I could die with vexation—— [*Throwing herself into a Chair.*

Oak. There it is—Now dare not I stir a step further—If I offer to go, she is in one of her fits in an instant—Never sure was woman at once of so violent and so delicate a constitution! What shall I say to sooth her! Nay, never make thyself so uneasy, my dear—Come, come, you know I love you.

Mrs. Oak. I know you hate me; and that your unkindness and barbarity will be the death of me. [*Whining.*

Oak. Do not vex yourself at this rate—This must be some mistake—Come, let me see this letter—— Nay, you shall not deny me. [*Taking the Letter.*

Mrs. Oak. There! take it, you know the hand, I am sure.

Oak. [Reading.] *To Charles Oakly, Esq.*—Hand! 'Tis a clerk-like hand, a good round text! and was certainly never penned by a fair lady.

Mrs. Oak. Ay, laugh at me, do!

Oak. Forgive me, my love, I did not mean to laugh at thee——But what says the letter!——[*Reading.*] *Daughter eloped—you must be privy to it—scandalous—dishonourable—satisfaction—revenge*—um, um, um,——*injured father*,

HENRY RUSSET.

Mrs. Oak. [*Rising.*] Well, sir—you see I have detected you——Tell me this instant where she is concealed.

Oak. So—so—so——This hurts me—I'm shocked— [*To himself.*

Mrs. Oak. What, are you confounded with your guilt! Have I caught you at last?

Oak. O that wicked Charles! To decoy a young lady from her parents in the country! The profligacy of the young fellows of this age is abominable. [*To himself.*

Mrs. Oak. [*Half aside, and musing.*] Charles!—Let me see!——Charles!—No! Impossible. This is all a trick.

Oak. He has certainly ruined this poor lady. [*To himself.*

Mrs. Oak. Art! art! all art! There's a sudden turn now! You have ready wit for an intrigue, I find.

Oak. Such an abandoned action! I wish I had never had the care of him. [*To himself.*

Mrs. Oak. Mighty fine, Mr. Oakly! Go on, sir, go on! I see what you mean.——Your assurance provokes me beyond your very falsehood itself. So you imagine, sir, that this affected concern, this flimsy pretence about Charles, is to bring you off. Matchless confidence! But I am armed against every thing——I am prepared for all your dark schemes: I am aware of all your low stratagems.

Oak. See there now! Was ever any thing so provoking? To persevere in your ridiculous——For Heaven's sake, my dear, don't distract me. When you see my mind thus agitated and uneasy, that a young fellow, whom his dying father, my own brother, committed to my care, should be guilty of such enormous wickedness; I say, when you are witness of my distress on this occasion, how can you be weak enough and cruel enough to——

Mrs. Oak. Prodigiously well, sir! You do it very well. Nay, keep it up, carry it on, there's nothing like going through with it. O you artful creature! But, sir, I am not to be so easily satisfied. I do not believe a syllable of all this——Give me the letter—[*Snatching the Letter.*]——You shall sorely repent this vile business, for I am resolved that I will know the bottom of it. [*Exit.*

Oak. This is beyond all patience. Provoking woman! Her absurd suspicions interpret every thing the wrong way. She delights to torment me. But this ungracious boy! In how many troubles will he involve his own and his lady's family!——I never imagined that he was of such abandoned principles. —O, here he comes!—

Enter MAJOR OAKLY *and* CHARLES.

Charles. Good-morrow, sir!

Maj. Good-morrow, brother, good-morrow!—— What! you have been at the old work, I find. I heard you—ding! dong! i'faith!—She has rung a noble peal in your ears. But how now? Why sure you've had a remarkable warm bout on't——You seem more ruffled than usual.

Oak. I am, indeed, brother! Thanks to that young gentleman there. Have a care, Charles! you may be called to a severe account for this. The honour of a family, sir, is no such light matter.

Charles. Sir!

Maj. Hey day! What has a curtain lecture produced a lecture of morality? What is all this!

Oak. To a profligate mind, perhaps, these things may appear agreeable in the beginning. But don't you tremble at the consequences?

Charles. I see, sir, that you are displeased with me, but I am quite at a loss to guess at the occasion.

Oak. Tell me, sir!—where is Miss Harriet Russet?

Charles. Miss Harriet Russet!—Sir—Explain.

Oak. Have not you decoyed her from her father?

Charles. I!—Decoyed her—Decoyed my Harriet! ——I would sooner die, than do her the least injury——What can this mean?

Maj. I believe the young dog has been at her, after all.

Oak. I was in hopes, Charles, you had better prin-

ciples. But there's a letter just come from her father——

Charles. A letter!—What letter? Dear sir, give it me. Some intelligence of my Harriet, Major!—— The letter, sir, the letter this moment, for Heaven's sake!

Oak. If this warmth, Charles, tends to prove your innocence——

Charles. Dear sir, excuse me——I'll prove any thing—Let me but see this letter, and I'll——

Oak. Let you see it?——I could hardly get a sight of it myself. Mrs. Oakly has it.

Charles. Has she got it? Major, I'll be with you again directly. [*Exit hastily.*

Maj. Hey day! The devil's in the boy! What a fiery set of people! By my troth, I think the whole family is made of nothing but combustibles.

Oak. I like this emotion. It looks well. It may serve too to convince my wife of the folly of her suspicions. Would to Heaven I could quiet them for ever!

Maj. Why, pray now, my dear, naughty brother, what heinous offence have you committed this morning? What new cause of suspicion? You have been asking one of the maids to mend your ruffle, I suppose, or have been hanging your head out of window, when a pretty young woman has passed by, or——

Oak. How can you trifle with my distresses, Major? Did not I tell you, it was about a letter?

Maj. A letter!—hum—A suspicious circumstance, to be sure! What, and the seal a true-lover's knot now, hey! or a heart transfixed with darts; or possibly the wax bore the industrious impression of a thimble; or perhaps the folds were lovingly connected by a wafer, pricked with a pin, and the direction written in a vile scrawl, and not a word spelt as it should be! ha! ha! ha!

Oak. Pooh! brother——Whatever it was, the letter, you find, was for Charles, not for me——this outrageous jealousy is the devil.

Maj. Mere matrimonial blessings and domestic comfort, brother! jealousy is a certain sign of love.

Oak. Love! it is this very love that hath made us both so miserable. Her love for me has confined me to my house like a state prisoner, without the liberty of seeing my friends, or the use of pen, ink, and paper; while my love for her has made such a fool of me, that I have never had the spirit to contradict her.

Maj. Ay, ay, there you've hit it; Mrs. Oakly would make an excellent wife, if you did but know how to manage her.

Oak. You are a rare fellow, indeed, to talk of managing a wife——A debauched bachelor——a rattle-brained rioting fellow——who have picked up your common-place notions of women in bagnios, taverns, and the camp; whose most refined commerce with the sex has been in order to delude country girls at your quarters, or to besiege the virtue of abigails, milliners, or mantua-makers' prentices.

Maj. So much the better!—so much the better! women are all alike in the main, brother, high or low, married or single, quality or no quality. I have found them so, from a duchess down to a milk-maid.

Oak. Your savage notions are ridiculous. What do you know of a husband's feelings?—You, who comprise all your qualities in your *honour*, as you call it!—Dead to all sentiments of delicacy, and incapable of any but the grossest attachments to women. One poor train of thinking, one narrow set of ideas, like the uniform of the regiment, serves the whole corps.

Maj. Very fine, brother!—there's common-place for you with a vengeance.—Henceforth, expect no quarter from me.—I tell you again and again, I know

the sex better than you do. They all love to give themselves airs, and to have power; every woman is a tyrant at the bottom. But they could never make a fool of me.—No, no!—no woman shall ever domineer over me, let her be mistress, or wife!

Oak. Single men can be no judges in these cases. To see a woman in uneasiness—a woman one loves too—one's wife—who can withstand it? You neither speak nor think like a man that has loved, and been married, Major!

Maj. I wish I could hear a married man speak my language——I'm a bachelor, it's true; but I am no bad judge of your case for all that. I know yours and Mrs. Oakly's disposition to a hair. She is all impetuosity and fire—A very magazine of touch-wood and gunpowder. You are hot enough too, upon occasion, but then it's over in an instant. In comes love and conjugal affection, as you call it; that is, mere folly and weakness—and you draw off your forces, just when you should pursue the attack, and follow your advantage. Have at her with spirit, and the day's your own, brother.

Oak. I tell you, brother, you mistake the matter. —Sulkiness, fits, tears!—these, and such as these, are things which make a feeling man uneasy.—Her passion and violence have not half such an effect on me!

Maj. Why, then, you may be sure, she'll play that upon you, which she finds does most execution.—But you must be proof against every thing. —If she's furious, set passion against passion: if you find her at her tricks, play off art against art, and foil her at her own weapons.—That's your game, brother!

Oak. Why, what would you have me do?

Maj. Do as you please for one month, whether she likes it or not: and I'll answer for it she will consent you shall do as you please all her life after.

Oak. This is fine talking—You do not consider the difficulty that——

Maj. You must overcome all difficulties.—Assert your right boldly, man!—give your own orders to servants, and see they observe them; read your own letters, and never let her have a sight of them; make your own appointments, and never be persuaded to break them; see what company you like; go out when you please; return when you please, and don't suffer yourself to be called to account where you have been. In short, do but shew yourself a man of spirit, leave off whining about love and tenderness, and nonsense, and the business is done, brother!

Oak. I believe you are in the right, Major! I see you are in the right. I'll do it—I'll certainly do it.—But then it hurts me to the soul, to think what uneasiness I shall give her. The first opening of my design will throw her into fits, and the pursuit of it, perhaps, may be fatal.

Maj. Fits! ha! ha! ha!—I'll engage to cure her of her fits. Nobody understands hysterical cases better than I do; besides, my sister's symptoms are not very dangerous. Did you ever hear of her falling into a fit when you was not by?—Was she ever found in convulsions in her closet?——No, no, these fits, the more care you take of them, the more you will increase the distemper: let them alone, and they will wear themselves out, I warrant you.

Oak. True, very true—you are certainly in the right.—I'll follow your advice. Where do you dine to-day?—I'll order the coach, and go with you.

Maj. O brave! keep up this spirit, and you are made for ever.

Oak. You shall see now, Major! Who's there?

Enter a SERVANT.

Order the coach directly. I shall dine out to-day.

Serv. The coach, sir!—Now, sir?

Oak. Ay, now, immediately.

Serv. Now, sir!——the—the—coach, sir!——that is——my mistress——

Maj. Sirrah! do as you are bid. Bid them put to this instant.

Serv. Ye——yes, sir——yes, sir. [*Exit.*

Oak. Well, where shall we dine?

Maj. At the St. Albans, or where you will. This is excellent, if you do but hold it.

Oak. I will have my own way, I am determined.

Maj. That's right.

Oak. I am steel.

Maj. Bravo!

Oak. Adamant.

Maj. Bravissimo!

Oak. Just what you'd have me.

Maj. Why that's well said. But, will you do it?

Oak. I will.

Maj. You won't.

Oak. I will. I'll be a fool to her no longer. But, harkye, Major; my hat and cane lie in my study. I'll go and steal them out, while she is busy talking with Charles.

Maj. Steal them! for shame! Pr'ythee take them boldly; call for them, make them bring them to you here; and go out with spirit, in the face of your whole family.

Oak. No, no,—you are wrong—let her rave after I am gone, and when I return you know, I shall exert myself with more propriety, after this open affront to her authority.

Maj. Well, take your own way.

Oak. Ay, ay—let me manage it, let me manage it. [*Exit.*

Maj. Manage it! ay, to be sure, you are a rare manager! It is dangerous, they say, to meddle between man and wife. I am no great favourite of

Mrs. Oakly's already: and in a week's time I expect to have the door shut in my teeth.

Enter CHARLES.

How now, Charles, what news?

Charles. Ruined and undone! She's gone, uncle! my Harriet's lost for ever.

Maj. Gone off with a man?—I thought so: they are all alike.

Charles. O no! Fled to avoid that hateful match with Sir Harry Beagle.

Maj. 'Faith, a girl of spirit!—Joy, Charles! I give you joy!—She is your own, my boy!—A fool and a great estate!—Devilish strong temptations!

Charles. A wretch! I was sure she would never have him.

Maj. No! to be sure!—Commend me to your modesty!—Refuse five thousand a year, and a baronet, for pretty Mr. Charles Oakley!——It is true, indeed, that the looby has not a single idea in his head, besides a hound, a hunter, a five-barred gate, and a horse-race; but then he's rich, and that will qualify his absurdities.—Money is a wonderful improver of the understanding.—But whence comes all this intelligence?

Charles. In an angry letter from her father——How miserable I am! If I had not offended my Harriet, much offended her, by that foolish riot and drinking at your house in the country, she would certainly, at such a time, have taken refuge in my arms.

Maj. A very agreeable refuge for a young lady to be sure, and extremely decent!

Charles. I am all uneasiness.—Did not she tell me, that she trembled at the thoughts of having trusted her affections with a man of such a wild disposition?—What a heap of extravagancies was I guilty of!

Maj. Extravagancies with a witness! Ah, you silly

young dog, you would ruin yourself with her father, in spite of all I could do. There you sat, as drunk as a lord, telling the old gentleman the whole affair, and swearing you would drive Sir Harry Beagle out of the country, though I kept winking and nodding, pulling you by the sleeve, and kicking your shins under the table, in hopes of stopping you; but all to no purpose.

Charles. What distress may she be in at this instant! Alone and defenceless!——Where! Where can she be?

Maj. What relations or friends has she in town?

Charles. Relations! let me see—'Faith, I have it! —If she is in town, ten to one but she is at her aunt's, Lady Freelove's. I'll go thither immediately.

Maj. Lady Freelove's! Hold, hold, Charles!—— do you know her ladyship?

Charles. Not much; but I'll break through all, to get to my Harriet.

Maj. I do know her ladyship.

Charles. Well, and what do you know of her?

Maj. O nothing!——Her ladyship is a woman of the world, that's all——She'll introduce Harriet to the best company.

Charles. What do you mean?

Maj. Yes, yes, I would trust a wife, or a daughter, or a mistress with Lady Freelove, to be sure!—I tell you what, Charles!—you're a good boy, but you don't know the world.—Women are fifty times oftener ruined by their acquaintance with each other, than by their attachment to men.—One thoroughly-paced lady will train up a thousand novices. —That Lady Freelove is an arrant——By the by, did not she, last summer, make formal proposals to Harriet's father from Lord Trinket?

Charles. Yes; but they were received with the utmost contempt. The old gentleman, it seems, hates a lord, and he told her so in plain terms.

Maj. Such an aversion to the nobility may not run in the blood. The girl, I warrant you, has no objection. However, if she's there, watch her narrowly, Charles. Lady Freelove is as mischievous as a monkey, and as cunning too.—Have a care of her, I say have a care of her.

Charles. If she's there, I'll have her out of the house within this half hour, or set fire to it.

Maj. Nay, now you are too violent——stay a moment, and we'll consider what's best to be done.

Enter OAKLY.

Oak. Come, is the coach ready? let us begone. Does Charles go with us?

Charles. I go with you!——What can I do? I am so vexed and distracted, and so many thoughts crowd in upon me, I don't know which way to turn myself.

Mrs. Oak. [*Within.*] The coach!—dines out!—where is your master?

Oak. Zounds, brother! here she is!

Enter MRS. OAKLY.

Mrs. Oak. Pray, Mr. Oakly, what is the matter you cannot dine at home to-day?

Oak. Don't be uneasy, my dear!—I have a little business to settle with my brother; so I am only just going to dinner with him and Charles, to the tavern.

Mrs. Oak. Why cannot you settle your business here, as well as at a tavern? but it is some of your ladies' business, I suppose, and so you must get rid of my company.——This is chiefly your fault, Major Oakly!

Maj. Lord, sister, what signifies it, whether a man dines at home or abroad? [*Coolly.*

Mrs. Oak. It signifies a great deal, sir! and I don't choose——

Maj. Phoo! let him go, my dear sister, let him go! he will be ten times better company when he comes back. I tell you what, sister—you sit at home, till you are quite tired of one another, and then you grow cross, and fall out. If you would but part a little now and then, you might meet again in good humour.

Mrs. Oak. I beg, Major Oakly, that you would trouble yourself about your own affairs, and let me tell you, sir, that I——

Oak. Nay, do not put thyself into a passion with the Major, my dear!—It is not his fault; and I shall come back to thee very soon.

Mrs. Oak. Come back!—why need you go out?—I know well enough when you mean to deceive me; for then there is always a pretence of dining with Sir John, or my lord, or somebody; but when you tell me, that you are going to a tavern, it's such a barefaced affront—

Oak. This is so strange now!—Why, my dear, I shall only just——

Mrs. Oak. Only just go after the lady in the letter, I suppose.

Oak. Well, well, I won't go then—Will that convince you? I'll stay with you, my dear!——will that satisfy you?

Maj. For shame! hold out, if you are a man. [*Apart.*

Oak. She has been so much vexed this morning already, I must humour her a little now. [*Apart.*

Maj. Fie! Fie! go out, or you are undone. [*Apart.*

Oak. You see it's impossible. [*Apart to* MRS. OAKLY.] I'll dine at home with thee, my love.

Mrs. Oak. Ay, ay, pray do, sir.—Dine at a tavern, indeed! [*Going.*

Oak. [*Returning.*] You may depend on me another time, Major.

Maj. Steel and adamant——Ah!

Mrs. Oak. [*Returning.*] Mr. Oakly!

Oak. O, my dear! [*Exeunt* MR. *and* MRS. OAKLY.

Maj. Ha! ha! ha! there's a picture of resolution! there goes a philosopher for you! ha! Charles!

Charles. O, uncle! I have no spirits to laugh now.

Maj. So! I have a fine time on't between you and my brother. Will you meet me to dinner at the St. Albans by four? We'll drink her health, and think of this affair.

Charles. Don't depend on me. I shall be running all over the town, in pursuit of my Harriet; at all events I'll go directly to Lady Freelove's. If I find her not there, which way I shall direct myself, Heaven knows.

Maj. Harkye, Charles! If you meet with her, you may be at a loss. Bring her to my house: I have a snug room, and—

Charles. Phoo! pr'ythee, uncle, don't trifle with me now.

Maj. Well, seriously then, my house is at your service.

Charles. I thank you; but I must be gone.

Maj. Ay, ay, bring her to my house, and we'll settle the whole affair for you. You shall clap her into a post-chaise, wheel her down to Scotland, and when you come back, send to settle her fortune with her father; that's the modern art of making love, Charles! [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Room in the Bull and Gate Inn.

Enter SIR HARRY BEAGLE *and* TOM.

Sir H. Ten guineas a mare, and a crown the man? hey, Tom!

Tom. Yes, your honour.

Sir H. And are you sure, Tom, that there is no flaw in his blood?

Tom. He's a good thing, sir, and as little beholden to the ground, as any horse that ever went over the turf upon four legs. Why, here's his whole pedigree, your honour!

Sir H. Is it attested?

Tom. Very well attested; it is signed by Jack Spur and my Lord Startal. [*Giving the Pedigree.*

Sir H. Let me see.—[Reading.] *Tom come tickle me was out of the famous Tantwivy mare, by Sir Aaron Driver's chesnut horse, White Stockings. White Stockings, his dam, was got by Lord Hedge's South Barb, full sister to the Proserpine Filly, and his sire Tom Jones; his grandam was the Irish Duchess, and his grandsire 'Squire Sportley's Trajan; his great, and great great grandam, were Newmarket Peggy and Black Moll, and his great grandsire, and great great grandsire, were Sir Ralph Whip's Regulus, and the famous Prince Anamaboo.* his
JOHN X SPUR,
mark.
STARTAL.

Tom. All fine horses, and won every thing! a

foal out of your honour's Bald-faced Venus, by this horse, would beat the world.

Sir H. Well then, we'll think on't.——But, pox on't, Tom, I have certainly knocked up my little roan gelding, in this damn'd wild-goose chase of threescore miles an end.

Tom. He's deadly blown, to be sure, your honour; and I am afraid we are upon a wrong scent after all. Madam Harriet certainly took across the country, instead of coming on to London.

Sir H. No, no, we traced her all the way up.—But d'ye hear, Tom, look out among the stables and repositories here in town, for a smart road nag, and a strong horse to carry a portmanteau.

Tom. Sir Roger Turf's horses are to be sold—I'll see if there's ever a tight thing there——but I suppose, sir, you would have one somewhat stronger than Snip——I don't think he's quite enough of a horse for your honour.

Sir H. Not enough of a horse! Snip's a powerful gelding; master of two stone more than my weight. If Snip stands sound, I would not take a hundred guineas for him. Poor Snip! go into the stable, Tom, see they give him a warm mash, and look at his heels and his eyes—But where's Mr. Russet all this while?

Tom. I left the 'squire at breakfast on a cold pigeon-pie, and inquiring after Madam Harriet, in the kitchen. I'll let him know your honour would be glad to see him here.

Sir H. Ay, do: but, harkye, Tom, be sure you take care of Snip.

Tom. I'll warrant your honour.

Sir H. I'll be down in the stables myself by and by. [*Exit* TOM.] Let me see——out of the famous Tantwivy by White Stockings; White Stockings his dam, full sister to the Proserpine Filly, and his sire —pox on't, how unlucky it is, that this damned ac-

cident should happen in the Newmarket week!——ten to one I lose my match with Lord Chokejade, by not riding myself, and I shall have no opportunity to hedge my bets neither——what a damned piece of work have I made on't—I have knock'd up poor Snip, shall lose my match, and as to Harriet, why, the odds are, that I lose my match there too——a skittish young tit! If I once get her tight in hand, I'll make her wince for it.——Her estate joined to my own, I would have the finest stud, and the noblest kennel in the whole country.——But here comes her father, puffing and blowing, like a broken-winded horse up hill.

Enter RUSSET.

Rus. Well, Sir Harry, have you heard any thing of her?

Sir H. Yes, I have been asking Tom about her, and he says, you may have her for five hundred guineas.

Rus. Five hundred guineas! how d'ye mean? where is she? which way did she take?

Sir H. Why, first she went to Epsom, then to Lincoln, then to Nottingham, and now she is at York.

Rus. Impossible! she could not go over half the ground in the time. What the devil are you talking of?

Sir H. Of the mare you was just now saying you wanted to buy.

Rus. The devil take the mare!——who would think of her when I am mad about an affair of so much more consequence?

Sir H. You seemed mad about her a little while ago. She's a fine mare, and a thing of shape and blood.

Rus. Damn her blood!——Harriet! my dear pro-

voking Harriet! Where can she be? Have you got any intelligence of her?

Sir H. No, 'faith, not I: we seem to be quite thrown out here—but, however, I have ordered Tom to try if he can hear any thing of her among the ostlers.

Rus. Why don't you inquire after her yourself? why don't you run up and down the whole town after her?——t'other young rascal knows where she is, I warrant you.——A provoking gipsy!—to run away, and torment her poor father, that dotes on her! I'll never see her face again.—Sir Harry, how can we get any intelligence of her? Why don't you speak! why don't you tell me?——Zounds! you seem as indifferent as if you did not care a farthing about her.

Sir H. Indifferent! you may well call me indifferent!——this damned chase after her will cost me a thousand——if it had not been for her, I would not have been off the course this week, to have saved the lives of my whole family——I'll hold you six to two that——

Rus. Zounds! hold your tongue, or talk more to the purpose—I swear, she is too good for you—you don't deserve such a wife—a fine, dear, sweet, lovely, charming girl!—She'll break my heart.—How shall I find her out?——Do, pr'ythee, Sir Harry, my dear, honest friend, consider how we may discover where she is fled to.

Sir H. Suppose you put an advertisement into the newspapers, describing her marks, her age, her height, and where she strayed from. I recovered a bay mare once by that method.

Rus. Advertise her!—What! describe my daughter, and expose her, in the public papers, with a reward for bringing her home, like horses stolen or strayed!——recovered a bay mare!——the devil's in the fellow!——he thinks of nothing but racers,

and bay mares, and stallions.——'Sdeath I wish your—

Sir H. I wish Harriet was fairly pounded; it would save us both a deal of trouble.

Rus. Which way shall I turn myself?——I am half distracted.——If I go to that young dog's house, he has certainly conveyed her somewhere out of my reach—if she does not send to me to-day, I'll give her up for ever——perhaps though, she may have met with some accident, and has nobody to assist her.—No, she is certainly with that young rascal.—I wish she was dead, and I was dead——I'll blow young Oakly's brains out.

Enter TOM.

Sir H. Well, Tom, how is poor Snip?

Tom. A little better, sir, after his warm mash: but Lady, the pointing bitch that followed you all the way, is deadly foot-sore.

Rus. Damn Snip and Lady!—have you heard any thing of Harriet?

Tom. Why, I came on purpose to let my master and your honour know, that John Ostler says as how, just such a lady as I told him Madam Harriet was, came here in a four-wheel chaise, and was fetched away soon after by a fine lady in a chariot.

Rus. Did she come alone?

Tom. Quite alone, only a servant maid, please your honour.

Rus. And what part of the town did they go to?

Tom. John Ostler says as how, they bid the coachman drive to Grosvenor square.

Sir H. Soho! puss!

Rus. She is certainly gone to that young rogue—he has got his aunt to fetch her from hence—or else she is with her own aunt, Lady Freelove—they both live in that part of the town. I'll go to his house, and in the mean while, Sir Harry, you shall step to

Lady Freelove's. We'll find her, I warrant you. I'll teach my young mistress to be gadding. She shall marry you to-night. Come along, Sir Harry, come along; we won't lose a minute. Come along.

Sir H. Soho! hark forward! wind 'em and cross 'em! hark forward! Yoics! Yoics! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

OAKLY'S *House.*

Enter MRS. OAKLY.

Mrs. Oak. After all, that letter was certainly intended for my husband. I see plain enough they are all in a plot against me. My husband intriguing, the major working him up to affront me, Charles owning his letters, and so playing into each other's hands.——They think me a fool, I find——but I'll be too much for them yet.——Mr. Oakly's temper is naturally open, and if he thinks my anger abated, and my suspicions laid asleep, he will certainly betray himself by his behaviour. I'll assume an air of good humour, pretend to believe the fine story they have trumped up, throw him off his guard, and so draw the secret out of him.——Here he comes.—How hard it is to dissemble one's anger! O, I could rate him soundly! but I'll keep down my indignation at present, though it chokes me.

Enter OAKLY.

O my dear! I am very glad to see you. Pray sit down. [*They sit.*] I longed to see you. It seemed an age, till I had an opportunity of talking over the silly affair that happened this morning. [*Mildly.*

Oak. Why, really, my dear——

Mrs. Oak. Nay, don't look so grave now. Come—it's all over. Charles and you have cleared up matters. I am satisfied.

Oak. Indeed! I rejoice to hear it! You make me happy beyond my expectation. This disposition will insure our felicity.

Mrs. Oak. Indeed I begin to think so. My uneasiness this morning, ha! ha! ha! To be so much alarmed about that idle letter, which turned out quite another thing at last—was not I very angry with you? ha! ha! ha! [*Affecting a Laugh.*

Oak. Don't mention it. Let us both forget it. Your present cheerfulness makes amends for every thing.

Mrs. Oak. I am apt to be too violent; I love you too well to be quite easy about you. [*Fondly.*]—Well—no matter—what is become of Charles!

Oak. Poor fellow! he is on the wing, rambling all over the town, in pursuit of this young lady.

Mrs. Oak. Where is he gone, pray?

Oak. First of all, I believe, to some of her relations.

Mrs. Oak. Relations? Who are they? Where do they live?

Oak. There is an aunt of hers lives just in the neighbourhood; Lady Freelove.

Mrs. Oak. Lady Freelove! Oho! gone to Lady Freelove's, is he?—and do you think he will hear any thing of her?

Oak. I don't know; but I hope so, with all my soul.

Mrs. Oak. Hope! with all your soul; do you hope so? [*Alarmed.*

Oak. Hope so! ye—yes—why, don't you hope so? [*Surprised.*

Mrs. Oak. Well—yes—[*Recovering.*]—O ay, to be sure. I hope it of all things. You know, my dear,

it must give me great satisfaction, as well as yourself, to see Charles well settled.

Oak. I should think so; and really I don't know where he can be settled so well. She is a most deserving young woman, I assure you.

Mrs. Oak. You are well acquainted with her then?

Oak. To be sure, my dear; after seeing her so often last summer at the Major's house in the country, and at her father's.

Mrs. Oak. So often!

Oak. O ay, very often—Charles took care of that—almost every day.

Mrs. Oak. Indeed! But pray—a—a—a—I say—a—a— [*Confused.*

Oak. What do you say, my dear?

Mrs. Oak. I say—a—a—[*Stammering.*] Is she handsome?

Oak. Prodigiously handsome indeed.

Mrs. Oak. Prodigiously handsome! and is she reckoned a sensible girl?

Oak. A very sensible, modest, agreeable, young lady as ever I knew. You would be extremely fond of her, I am sure. You can't imagine how happy I was in her company. Poor Charles! she soon made a conquest of him, and no wonder, she has so many elegant accomplishments! such an infinite fund of cheerfulness and good humour! Why, she's the darling of the whole country.

Mrs. Oak. Lord! you seem quite in raptures about her!

Oak. Raptures!—not at all. I was only telling you the young lady's character. I thought you would be glad to find that Charles had made so sensible a choice, and was so likely to be happy.

Mrs. Oak. O, Charles! True, as you say, Charles will be mighty happy.

Oak. Don't you think so?

Mrs. Oak. I am convinced of it. Poor Charles! I am much concerned for him. He must be very uneasy about her. I was thinking whether we could be of any service to him in this affair.

Oak. Was you, my love? that is very good of you! Why, to be sure, we must endeavour to assist him. Let me see? How can we manage it? Gad! I have hit it. The luckiest thought! and it will be of great service to Charles.

Mrs. Oak. Well, what is it? [*Eagerly.*]—You know I would do any thing to serve Charles, and oblige you. [*Mildly.*

Oak. That is so kind! Lord, my dear, if you would but always consider things in this proper light, and continue this amiable temper, we should be the happiest people——

Mrs. Oak. I believe so: but what's your proposal?

Oak. I am sure you'll like it,—Charles, you know, may, perhaps, be so lucky as to meet with this lady.—

Mrs. Oak. True.

Oak. Now I was thinking, that he might, with your leave, my dear——

Mrs. Oak. Well!

Oak. Bring her home here——

Mrs. Oak. How!

Oak. Yes, bring her home here, my dear;—it will make poor Charles's mind quite easy: and you may take her under your protection till her father comes to town.

Mrs. Oak. Amazing! this is even beyond my expectation.

Oak. Why!——what!——

Mrs. Oak. Was there ever such assurance! [*Rises.*] Take her under my protection! What! would you keep her under my nose?

Oak. Nay, I never conceived—I thought you would have approved——

Mrs. Oak. What! make me your convenient woman!—No place but my own house to serve your purposes?

Oak. Lord, this is the strangest misapprehension! I am quite astonished.

Mrs. Oak. Astonished! yes——confused, detected, betrayed, by your vain confidence of imposing on me. Why, sure you imagine me an ideot, a driveller. Charles, indeed! yes, Charles is a fine excuse for you. The letter this morning, the letter, Mr. Oakly!

Oak. The letter! why sure that——

Mrs. Oak. Is sufficiently explained. You have made it very clear to me. Now I am convinced. I have no doubt of your perfidy. But I thank you for some hints you have given me, and you may be sure I shall make use of them: nor will I rest, till I have full conviction, and overwhelm you with the strongest proof of your baseness towards me.

Oak. Nay, but——

Mrs. Oak. Go, go! I have no doubt of your falsehood: away! [*Exit* MRS. OAKLY.

Oak. Was there ever any thing like this? Such unaccountable behaviour! angry I don't know why! jealous of I know not what! pretending to be satisfied merely to draw me in, and then creating imaginary proofs out of an innocent conversation.—Hints!——hints I have given her!—What can she mean?——

TOILET *crossing the Stage.*

Toilet! where are you going?

Toil. To order the porter to let in no company to my lady to-day. She won't see a single soul, sir. [*Exit.*

Oak. What an unhappy woman! Now will she sit all day, feeding on her suspicions, till she has convinced herself of the truth of them.

JOHN *crossing the Stage.*

Well, sir, what's your business?

John. Going to order the chariot, sir!—my lady's going out immediately. [*Exit.*

Oak. Going out! what is all this?—But every way she makes me miserable. Wild and ungovernable as the sea or the wind! made up of storms and tempests! I can't bear it: and one way or other I will put an end to it.—I'll follow her, and let her know—No, I'll let it alone: she's not in a humour now to hearken to reason—Suppose I go to the Major, and consult—Ay! but he'll laugh at me—What can I do?—I'll go to my own room. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

LADY FREELOVE'S *House.*

Enter LADY FREELOVE, *with a Card*—SERVANT *following.*

Lady F. [Reading as she enters.]—*And will take the liberty of waiting on her ladyship* en cavalier, *as he comes from the menége.* Does any body wait, that brought this card?

Serv. Lord Trinket's servant is in the hall, madam.

Lady F. My compliments, and I shall be glad to see his lordship.—Where is Miss Russet?

Serv. In her own chamber, madam.

Lady F. What is she doing?

Serv. Writing, I believe, madam.

Lady F. Oh, ridiculous!—scribbling to that Oakly, I suppose. [*Apart.*]—Let her know, I should

be glad of her company here. [*Exit* SERVANT.] It is a mighty troublesome thing to manage a simple girl, that knows nothing of the world. Harriet, like all other girls, is foolishly fond of this young fellow of her own choosing, her first love; that is to say, the first man that is particularly civil; and the first air of consequence which a young lady gives herself. Poor silly soul!—But Oakly must not have her, positively. A match with Lord Trinket will add to the dignity of the family. I must bring her into it. I will throw her into his way as often as possible, and leave him to make his party good as fast as he can. But here she comes.

Enter HARRIET.

Well, Harriet, still in the pouts! nay, pr'ythee my dear little runaway girl, be more cheerful! your everlasting melancholy puts me into the vapours.

Har. Dear madam, excuse me. How can I be cheerful, in my present situation? I know my father's temper so well, that I am sure this step of mine must almost distract him. I sometimes wish that I had remained in the country, let what would have been the consequence.

Lady F. Why, it is a naughty child, that's certain, but it need not be so uneasy about papa, as you know that I wrote by last night's post to acquaint him that his little lost sheep was safe, and that you were ready to obey his commands in every particular, except marrying that oaf, Sir Harry Beagle.—Lord! Lord! what a difference there is between a country and town education! Why, a London lass would have jumped out of a window into a gallant's arms, and without thinking of her father, unless it were to have drawn a few bills on him, been an hundred miles off in nine or ten hours, or perhaps out of the kingdom in twenty-four.

Har. I fear I have already been too precipitate. I tremble for the consequences.

Lady F. I swear, child, you are a downright prude. Your way of talking gives me the spleen; so full of affection, and duty, and virtue, 'tis just like a funeral sermon. And yet, pretty soul! it can love—Well, I wonder at your taste; a sneaking, simple gentleman, without a title! and when to my knowledge you might have a man of quality to-morrow.

Har. Perhaps so. Your ladyship must excuse me, but many a man of quality would make me miserable.

Lady F. Indeed, my dear, these antediluvian notions will never do now-a-days; and at the same time too, those little wicked eyes of yours speak a very different language. Indeed you have fine eyes, child! And they have made fine work with Lord Trinket.

Har. Lord Trinket! [*Contemptuously.*

Lady F. Yes, Lord Trinket; you know it as well as I do; and yet, you illnatured thing, you will not vouchsafe him a single smile. But you must give the poor soul a little encouragement, pr'ythee do.

Har. Indeed I can't, madam, for of all mankind Lord Trinket is my aversion.

Lady F. Why so, child? He is counted a well-bred, sensible young fellow, and the women all think him handsome.

Har. Yes, he is just polite enough to be able to be very unmannerly, with a great deal of good breeding; is just handsome enough to make him most excessively vain of his person; and has just reflection enough to finish him for a coxcomb; qualifications which are all very common among those whom your ladyship calls men of quality.

Lady F. A satirist too! Indeed, my dear, this affectation sits very awkwardly upon you. There will be a superiority in the behaviour of persons of fashion.

Har. A superiority, indeed! For his lordship always behaves with so much insolent familiarity, that I should almost imagine he was soliciting me for other favours, rather than to pass my whole life with him.

Lady F. Innocent freedoms, child, which every fine woman expects to be taken with her, as an acknowledgment of her beauty.

Har. They are freedoms, which I think no innocent woman can allow.

Lady F. Romantic to the last degree!—Why, you are in the country still, Harriet!

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. My Lord Trinket, madam.

[*Exit* SERVANT.

Lady F. I swear now I have a good mind to tell him all you have said.

Enter LORD TRINKET, *in Boots, &c. as from the Riding House.*

Your lordship's most obedient humble servant.

Lord T. Your ladyship does me too much honour? Here I am *en bottine* as you see—just come from the menége. Miss Russet, I am your slave. I declare it makes me quite happy to find you together. 'Pon honour, ma'am, [*To* HARRIET.] I begin to conceive great hopes of you; and as for you, Lady Freelove, I cannot sufficiently commend your assiduity with your fair pupil. She was before possessed of every grace that nature could bestow on her, and nobody is so well qualified as your ladyship to give her the *bon ton.*

Har. Compliment and contempt all in a breath! My lord, I am obliged to you. But, waving my acknowledgments, give me leave to ask your lordship

whether nature and the *bon ton* (as you call it) are so different, that we must give up one in order to obtain the other?

Lord T. Totally opposite, madam. The chief aim of the *bon ton* is to render persons of family different from the vulgar, for whom indeed nature serves very well. For this reason it has, at various times, been ungenteel to see, to hear, to walk, to be in good health, and to have twenty other horrible perfections of nature. Nature indeed may do very well sometimes. It made you, for instance, and it then made something very lovely; and if you would suffer us of quality to give you the *ton*, you would be absolutely divine: but now—me—madam—me ——nature never made such a thing as me.

Har. Why, indeed, I think your lordship has very few obligations to her.

Lord T. Then you really think it's all my own? I declare now that is a mighty genteel compliment: Nay, if you begin to flatter already, you improve apace. 'Pon honour, Lady Freelove, I believe we shall make something of her at last.

Lady F. No doubt on't. It is in your lordship's power to make her a complete woman of fashion at once.

Lord T. Hum! Why, ay——

Har. Your lordship must excuse me. I am of a very tasteless disposition. I shall never bear to be carried out of nature.

Lady F. You are out of nature now, Harriet! I am sure no woman but yourself ever objected to being carried among persons of quality. Would you believe it, my lord! here has she been a whole week in town, and would never suffer me to introduce her to a rout, an assembly, a concert, or even to court, or to the opera; nay, would hardly so much as mix with a living soul that has visited me.

Lord T. No wonder, madam, you do not adopt

the manners of persons of fashion, when you will not even honour them with your company. Were you to make one in our little coteries, we should soon make you sick of the boors and bumpkins of the horrid country. By the by, I met a monster at the riding house this morning, who gave me some intelligence, that will surprise you, concerning your family.

Har. What intelligence?

Lady F. Who was this monster, as your lordship calls him? A curiosity, I dare say.

Lord T. This monster, madam, was formerly my head groom, and had the care of all my running horses; but growing most abominably surly and extravagant, as you know all these fellows do, I turned him off; and ever since my brother Slouch Trinket has had the care of my stud, rides all my principal matches himself, and——

Har. Dear my lord, don't talk of your groom and your brother, but tell me the news. Do you know any thing of my father?

Lord T. Your father, madam, is now in town. This fellow, you must know, is now groom to Sir Harry Beagle, your sweet rural swain, and informed me that his master and your father were running all over the town in quest of you; and that he himself had orders to inquire after you; for which reason, I suppose, he came to the riding house stables, to look after a horse, thinking it, to be sure, a very likely place to meet you. Your father, perhaps, is gone to seek you at the Tower, or Westminster Abbey, which is all the idea he has of London; and your faithful lover is probably cheapening a hunter, and drinking strong beer, at the Horse and Jockey in Smithfield.

Lady F. The whole set admirably disposed of!

Har. Did not your lordship inform him where I was?

Lord T. Not I, 'pon honour, madam; that I left to their own ingenuity to discover.

Lady F. And pray, my lord, where in this town have this polite company bestowed themselves?

Lord T. They lodge, madam, of all places in the world, at the George and Blue Boar, in Holborn.

Lady F. Ha! ha! ha! George and Blue Boar! Incomparable! What, have they brought any hay or cattle to town?

Lord T. Very well, Lady Freelove, very well, indeed! There they are like so many graziers; and there, it seems, they have learned that this lady is certainly in London.

Har. Do, dear madam, send a card directly to my father, informing him where I am, and that your ladyship would be glad to see him here: but, for Heaven's sake, desire him not to bring that wretched fellow along with him.

Lord T. Wretched fellow! Oho! *Courage*, Milor Trinket! [*Aside.*

Lady F. I'll send immediately. Who's there?

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. [*Apart to* LADY FREELOVE.] Sir Harry Beagle is below, madam.

Lady F. [*Apart to* SERVANT.] I am not at home. ——Have they let him in?

Serv. Yes, madam.

Lady F. How abominably unlucky this is! Well, then, show him into my dressing-room. I will come to him there. [*Exit* SERVANT.

Lord T. Lady Freelove! no engagement, I hope? We won't part with you, 'pon honour.

Lady F. The worst engagement in the world. A pair of musty old prudes! Lady Formal and Miss Prate.

Lord T. O the beldams! As nauseous as ipecacuanha, 'pon honour.

Lady F. Lud! lud! what shall I do with them? Why do these foolish women come troubling me now? I must wait on them in the dressing-room, and you must excuse the card, Harriet, till they are gone. I'll despatch them as soon as I can, but Heaven knows when I shall get rid of them, for they are both everlasting gossips! though the words come from her ladyship one by one, like drops from a still, while the other tiresome woman overwhelms us with a flood of impertinence. Harriet, you'll entertain his lordship till I return. [*Exit.*

Lord T. Gone!—Egad! my affairs here begin to grow very critical,—the father in town! lover in town!—Surrounded by enemies!—What shall I do? [*To* HARRIET.] I have nothing for it but a *coup de main*.—'Pon honour, I am not sorry for the coming in of these old tabbies, and am much obliged to her ladyship, for leaving us such an agreeable tête-à-tête.

Har. Your lordship will find me extremely bad company.

Lord T. Not in the least, my dear! We'll entertain ourselves one way or other, I'll warrant you.—'Egad, I think it a mighty good opportunity to establish a better acquaintance with you.

Har. I don't understand you.

Lord T. No?——Why then I'll speak plainer.—[*Pausing, and looking her full in the face.*] You are an amazing fine creature, 'pon honour.

Har. If this be your lordship's polite conversation, I shall leave you to amuse yourself in soliloquy. [*Going.*

Lord T. No, no, no, madam, that must not be. [*Stopping her.*] This place, my passion, the opportunity, all conspire——

Har. How, sir! you don't intend to do me any violence?

Lord T. 'Pon honour, ma'am, it will be doing

great violence to myself, if I do not. You must excuse me. [*Struggling with her.*

Har. Help! murder! help! help!

Enter CHARLES, *hastily.*

Charles. What do I hear? My Harriet's voice calling for help!—Ha! [*Seeing them.*] Is it possible?—Turn, ruffian! I'll find you employment. [*Drawing.*

Lord T. You are a most impertinent scoundrel, and I'll whip you through the lungs, 'pon honour.

[*They fight*—HARRIET *runs out, screaming,* Help! *&c.*

Enter LADY FREELOVE, *and* SIR HARRY BEAGLE.

Lady F. How's this?—Swords drawn in my house!—Part them——[*They are parted.*] This is the most impudent thing——

Lord T. Well, rascal, I shall find a time; I know you, sir!

Charles. The sooner the better; I know your lordship too.

Sir H. I'faith, madam, [*To* LADY FREELOVE.] we had like to have been in at the death.

Lady F. What is all this? Pray, sir, what is the meaning of your coming hither, to raise this disturbance? Do you take my house for a brothel?

[*To* CHARLES.

Charles. Not I, indeed, madam; but I believe his lordship does.

Lord T. Impudent scoundrel!

Lady F. Your conversation, sir, is as insolent as your behaviour. Who are you? What brought you here?

Charles. I am one, madam, always ready to draw my sword in defence of innocence in distress, and more especially in the cause of that lady I delivered

from his lordship's fury; in search of whom I troubled your ladyship's house.

Lady F. Her lover, I suppose; or what?

Charles. At your ladyship's service; though not quite so violent in my passion as his lordship there.

Lord T. Impertinent rascal!

Lady F. You shall be made to repent of this insolence.

Lord T. Your ladyship may leave that to me.

Charles. Ha! ha!

Sir H. But, pray what is become of the lady all this while? Why, Lady Freelove, you told me she was not here, and i'faith, I was just drawing off another way, if I had not heard the view-halloo.

Lady F. You shall see her immediately, sir! Who's there?

Enter SERVANT.

Where is Miss Russet?

Serv. Gone out, madam.

Lady F. Gone out?—Where?

Serv. I don't know, madam: but she ran down the back stairs, crying for help, crossed the servants' hall in tears, and took a chair at the door.

Lady F. Blockheads! to let her go out in a chair alone!—Go and inquire after her immediately.

[*Exit* SERVANT.

Sir H. Gone!—What a pox, had I just run her down, and is the little puss stole away at last?

Lady F. Sir, if you will walk in, [*To* SIR HARRY.] with his lordship and me, perhaps you may hear some tidings of her; though it is most probable, she may be gone to her father. I don't know any other friend she has in town.

Charles. I am heartily glad she is gone. She is safer any where than in this house.

Lady F. Mighty well, sir!—My lord, Sir Harry, ——I attend you.

Lord T. You shall hear from me, sir!

[*To* CHARLES.

Charles. Very well, my lord.

Sir H. Stole away!——pox on't——stole away!

[*Exeunt* SIR HARRY *and* LORD TRINKET.

Lady F. Before I follow the company, give me leave to tell you, sir, that your behaviour here has been so extraordinary——

Charles. My treatment here, madam, has indeed been very extraordinary.

Lady F. Indeed!—Well, no matter—permit me to acquaint you, sir, that there lies your way out, and that the greatest favour you can do me, is to leave the house immediately.

Charles. That your ladyship may depend on. Since you have put Miss Russet to flight, you may be sure of not being troubled with my company. I'll after her immediately.

Lady F. If she has any regard for her reputation, she'll never put herself into such hands as yours.

Charles. O, madam, there can be no doubt of her regard for that, by her leaving your ladyship.

Lady F. Leave my house.

Charles. Directly——A charming house! and a charming lady of the house too!—Ha! ha! ha!

Lady F. Vulgar fellow!

Charles. Fine lady! [*Exeunt severally.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

LADY FREELOVE'S *House.*

Enter LADY FREELOVE, *and* LORD TRINKET.

Lord T. *Doucement, doucement,* my dear Lady Freelove!——Excuse me, I meant no harm, 'pon honour!

Lady F. Indeed, indeed, my Lord Trinket, this is absolutely intolerable! What, to offer rudeness to a young lady in my house! What will the world say of it?

Lord T. Just what the world pleases.——It does not signify a doit what they say.—However, I ask pardon; but, egad, I thought it was the best way.—Devil take Sir Harry, and t'other scoundrel too!—That they should come driving hither just at so critical an instant!—And that the wild little thing should take wing, and fly away the lord knows whither!

Lady F. Come, come, my lord, a truce with your reflections on my niece! Let us consider what is best to be done.

Lord T. E'en just what your ladyship thinks proper—For my part I am entirely *dérangée.*

Lady F. Will you submit to be govern'd by me, then?

Lord T. I'll be all obedience——your ladyship's slave, 'pon honour.

Lady F. Why then, as this is rather an ugly affair in regard to me, as well as your lordship, and may make some noise, I think it absolutely necessary, that you should wait on her father, palliate matters as well as you can, and make a formal repetition of your proposal of marriage.

Lord T. Your ladyship is perfectly in the right.—You are quite *au fait* of the affair. It shall be done immediately, and then your reputation will be safe, and my conduct justified to all the world. But should the old rustic continue as stubborn as his daughter, your ladyship, I hope, has no objections to my being a little *rusée*, for I must have her, 'pon honour.

Lady F. Do what you will, I wash my hands of it. She's out of my care now, you know.—But you must beware your rivals. One, you know, is in the house with her, and the other will lose no opportunities of getting to her.

Lord T. As to the fighting gentleman, I shall cut out work for him in his own way. I'll send him a *petit billet* to-morrow morning, and then there can be no great difficulty in outwitting her bumpkin father, and the baronet.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Captain O'Cutter, to wait on your ladyship.

Lady F. O the hideous fellow! The Irish sailorman, for whom I prevailed on your lordship to get the post of regulating captain. I suppose, he is come to load me with his odious thanks. I won't be troubled with him now.

Lord T. Let him in, by all means. He is the best creature to laugh at in nature. He is a perfect sea monster, and always looks and talks as if he was upon deck. Besides, a thought strikes me——He may be of use.

Lady F. Well——send the creature up then. [*Exit* SERVANT.] But what fine thought is this?

Lord T. A *coup de maitre*, 'pon honour! I intend ——but, hush! here the porpus comes.

Enter CAPTAIN O'CUTTER.

Lady F. Captain, your humble servant! I am very glad to see you.

O'Cut. I am much obliged to you, my lady! Upon my conscience, the wind favours me at all points. I had no sooner got under way, to tank your ladyship, but I have borne down upon my noble friend his lordship too. I hope your lordship's well?

Lord T. Very well, I thank you, Captain!—But you seem to be hurt in the service: what is the meaning of that patch over your right eye?

O'Cut. Some advanced wages from my new post, my lord! This pressing is hot work, though it entitles us to smart money.

Lady F. And pray, in what perilous adventure did you get that scar, Captain?

O'Cut. Quite out of my element, indeed, my lady. I got it in an engagement by land. A day or two ago, I 'spied three stout fellows, belonging to a merchantman. They made down Wapping. I immediately gave my lads the signal to chase, and we bore down right upon them. They tacked, and lay to—We gave them a thundering broadside, which they resaved like men; and one of them made use of small arms, which carried off the weathermost corner of Ned Gage's hat; so I immediately stood in with him, and raked him, but resaved a wound on my starboard eye, from the stock of the pistol. However, we took them all, and they now lie under the hatches, with fifty more, a-board a tender off the Tower.

Lord T. Well done, noble Captain!——But, however, you will soon have better employment, for I

think, the next step to your present post, is commonly a ship.

O'Cut. The sooner the better, my lord! Honest Terence O'Cutter shall never flinch, I warrant you; and has had as much sea-sarvice, as any man in the navy.

Lord T. You may depend on my good offices, Captain! But, in the mean time, it is in your power to do me a favour.

O'Cut. A favour, my lord!—your lordship does me honour. I would go round the world, from one end to the other, by day or by night, to sarve your lordship, or my good lady here.

Lord T. Dear madam, the luckiest thought in nature! [*Apart to* LADY F.]——The favour I have to ask of you, Captain, need not carry you so far out of your way. The whole affair is, that there are a couple of impudent fellows, at an inn in Holborn, who have affronted me, and you would oblige me infinitely, by pressing them into his majesty's service.

Lady F. Now I understand——Admirable! [*Apart.*

O'Cut. With all my heart, my lord, and tank you too, 'fait. But, by the by, I hope they are not housekeepers, or freemen of the city. There's the devil to pay in meddling with them. They boder one so about liberty, and property, and stuff.—It was but t'other day, that Jack Trowser was carried before my Lord Mayor, and lost above a twelvemonth's pay, for nothing at all, at all.

Lord T. I'll take care you shall be brought into no trouble. These fellows were formerly my grooms. If you'll call on me in the morning, I'll go with you to the place.

O'Cut. I'll be with your lordship, and bring with me four or five as pretty boys, as you'll wish to clap your two looking eyes upon of a summer's day.

Lord T. I am much obliged to you—But, Captain, I have another little favour to beg of you.

O'Cut. Upon my shoul, I'll do it.

Lord T. What, before you know it?

O'Cut. Fore and aft, my lord!

Lord T. A gentleman has offended me in a point of honour——

O'Cut. Cut his troat!

Lord T. Will you carry him a letter from me?

O'Cut. Indeed and I will:—and I'll take you in tow too; and you shall engage him yard-arm and yard-arm.

Lord T. Why, then, Captain, you'll come a little earlier to-morrow morning than you proposed, that you may attend him with my billet, before you proceed on the other affair.

O'Cut. Never fear it, my lord——Your sarvant!—My ladyship, your humble sarvant!

Lady F. Captain, yours—Pray give my service to my friend Mrs. O'Cutter. How does she do?

O'Cut. I tank your ladyship's axing——The dear creature is purely tight and well.

Lord T. How many children have you, Captain?

O'Cut. Four, and please your lordship, and another upon the stocks.

Lord T. I hope to be at the christening.——I'll stand godfather, Captain!

O'Cut. Your lordship's very good.

Lord T. Well, you'll come to-morrow.

O'Cut. I'll not fail, my lord.—Little Terence O'Cutter never fails, fait, when a troat is to be cut. [*Exit.*

Lady F. Ha! ha! ha! But sure you don't intend to ship off both her father and her country lover for the Indies?

Lord T. O no! Only let them contemplate the inside of a ship for a day or two.

Lady F. Well, but after all, my lord, this is a very

bold undertaking. I don't think you'll be able to put it in practice.

Lord T. Nothing so easy, 'pon honour.—To press a gentleman—a man of quality—one of us—would not be so easy, I grant you. But these fellows, you know, have not half so decent an appearance as one of my footmen: and from their behaviour, conversation, and dress, it is very possible to mistake them for grooms and ostlers.

Lady F. There may be something in that, indeed.—But what use do you propose to make of this stratagem?

Lord T. Every use in nature. This artifice must, at least, take them out of the way for some time, and, in the mean while, measures may be concerted to carry off the girl.

Enter a SERVANT.

Serv. Mrs. Oakly, madam, is at the door, in her chariot, and desires to have the honour of speaking to your ladyship, on particular business.

Lord T. Mrs. Oakly! what can that jealous-pated woman want with you?

Lady F. No matter what.—I hate her mortally.—Let her in. [*Exit* SERVANT.

Lord T. What wind blows her hither?

Lady F. A wind that must blow us some good.

Lord T. How?—I was amazed you chose to see her.

Lady F. How can you be so slow of apprehension!——She comes, you may be sure, on some occasion relating to this girl: in order to assist young Oakly, perhaps, to soothe me, and gain intelligence, and so forward the match; but I'll forbid the banns, I warrant you.——Whatever she wants, I'll draw some sweet mischief out of it.——But, away! away!—I think I hear her—slip down the back stairs——or—

stay, now I think on't, go out this way—meet her—and be sure to make her a very respectful bow, as you go out.

Lord T. Hush! here she is!

Enter MRS. OAKLY.

[LORD TRINKET *bows, and exit.*

Mrs. Oak. I beg pardon, for giving your ladyship this trouble.

Lady F. I am always glad of the honour of seeing Mrs. Oakly.

Mrs. Oak. There is a letter, madam, just come from the country, which has occasioned some alarm in our family. It comes from Mr. Russet——

Lady F. Mr. Russet!

Mrs. Oak. Yes, from Mr. Russet, madam; and is chiefly concerning his daughter. As she has the honour of being related to your ladyship, I took the liberty of waiting on you.

Lady F. She is, indeed, as you say, madam, a relation of mine; but, after what has happened, I scarce know how to acknowledge her.

Mrs. Oak. Has she been so much to blame then?

Lady F. So much, madam!——Only judge for yourself.——Though she had been so indiscreet, not to say indecent, in her conduct, as to elope from her father, I was in hopes to have hushed up that matter, for the honour of our family.—But she has run away from me too, madam:—went off in the most abrupt manner, not an hour ago.

Mrs. Oak. You surprise me. Indeed, her father, by his letter, seems apprehensive of the worst consequences.—But does your ladyship imagine any harm has happened?

Lady F. I can't tell—I hope not——But, indeed, she's a strange girl. You know, madam, young women can't be too cautious in their conduct. She

is, I am sorry to declare it, a very dangerous person to take into a family.

Mrs. Oak. Indeed! [*Alarmed.*

Lady F. If I was to say all I know——

Mrs. Oak. Why, sure your ladyship knows of nothing, that has been carried on clandestinely between her and Mr. Oakly. [*In disorder.*

Lady F. Mr. Oakly!

Mrs. Oakly. Mr. Oakly—no, not Mr. Oakly—that is, not my husband—I don't mean him—not him—but his nephew—young Mr. Oakly.

Lady F. Jealous of her husband! So, so! now I know my game. [*Aside.*

Mrs. Oak. But pray, madam, give me leave to ask, was there any thing very particular in her conduct, while she was in your ladyship's house?

Lady F. Why, really, considering she was here scarce a week, her behaviour was rather mysterious;—letters and messages, to and fro, between her and I don't know who.—I suppose you know, that Mr. Oakly's nephew has been here, madam?

Mrs. Oak. I was not sure of it. Has he been to wait on your ladyship already on this occasion?

Lady F. To wait on me!——The expression is much too polite for the nature of his visit.—My Lord Trinket, the nobleman whom you met as you came in, had, as you must know, madam, some thoughts of my niece, and, as it would have been an advantageous match, I was glad of it: but, I believe, after what he has been witness to this morning, he will drop all thoughts of it.

Mrs. Oak. I am sorry that any relation of mine should so far forget himself——

Lady F. It's no matter—his behaviour, indeed, as well as the young lady's, was pretty extraordinary—and yet, after all, I don't believe he is the object of her affections.

Mrs. Oak. Ha! [*Much alarmed.*

Lady F. She has certainly an attachment somewhere, a strong one; but his lordship, who was present all the time, was convinced, as well as myself, that Mr. Oakly's nephew was rather a convenient friend, a kind of go-between, than the lover.—— Bless me, madam, you change colour!—you seem uneasy! What's the matter?

Mrs. Oak. Nothing,——madam,——nothing,—— a little shocked that my husband should behave so.

Lady F. Your husband, madam!

Mrs. Oak. His nephew, I mean.——His unpardonable rudeness——But I am not well——I am sorry I have given your ladyship so much trouble—I'll take my leave.

Lady F. I declare, madam, you frighten me. Your being so visibly affected, makes me quite uneasy. I hope I have not said any thing——I really don't believe your husband is in fault. Men, to be sure, allow themselves strange liberties—But, I think, nay, I am sure, it cannot be so—It is impossible! Don't let what I have said have any effect on you.

Mrs. Oak. No, it has not—I have no idea of such a thing.—Your ladyship's most obedient—[*Going, returns.*]—But, sure, madam, you have not heard—or don't know any thing.

Lady F. Come, come, Mrs. Oakly, I see how it is, and it would not be kind to say all I know. I dare not tell you what I have heard. Only, be on your guard—there can be no harm in that. Do you be against giving the girl any countenance, and see what effect it has.

Mrs. Oak. I will——I am much obliged——But does it appear to your ladyship, then, that Mr. Oakly——

Lady F. No, not at all—nothing in't, I dare say—I would not create uneasiness in a family—but I am a woman myself, have been married, and can't help

feeling for you.—But don't be uneasy, there's nothing in't, I dare say.

Mrs. Oak. I think so.——Your ladyship's humble servant.

Lady F. Your servant, madam.——Pray don't be alarmed; I must insist on your not making yourself uneasy.

Mrs. Oak. Not at all alarmed—not in the least uneasy—Your most obedient. [*Exit.*

Lady F. Ha! ha! ha! There she goes, brimful of anger and jealousy, to vent it all on her husband. —Mercy on the poor man!

Enter LORD TRINKET.

Bless me, my lord, I thought you was gone!

Lord T. Only into the next room. My curiosity would not let me stir a step further. I heard it all, and was never more diverted in my life, 'pon honour! Ha! ha! ha!

Lady F. How the silly creature took it!—Ha! ha! ha!

Lord T. Ha! ha! ha!—My dear Lady Freelove, you have a deal of ingenuity, a deal of *esprit*, 'pon honour.

Lady F. A little shell thrown into the enemy's works, that's all.

Both. Ha! ha! ha! ha!

Lady F. But I must leave you—I have twenty visits to pay. You'll let me know how to succeed in your secret expedition.

Lord T. That you may depend on.

Lady F. Remember, then, that to-morrow morning I expect to see you. At present, your lordship will excuse me. Poor Mr. Oakly, I do pity that poor man, from my soul! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

MR. OAKLY'S *House.*

Enter HARRIET, *following* WILLIAM.

Har. Not at home! Are you sure, that Mrs. Oakly is not at home, sir?

Will. She is just gone out, madam.

Har. If you will give me leave, sir, I will wait till she returns.

Will. You would not see her, if you did, madam. She has given positive orders not to be interrupted with any company to-day.

Har. Sure, sir, if you was to let her know, that I had particular business———

Will. I should not dare to trouble her, indeed, madam.

Har. How unfortunate this is! What can I do?—Pray sir, can I see Mr. Oakly, then?

Will. Yes, madam: I'll acquaint my master, if you please.

Har. Pray do, sir.

Will. Will you favour me with your name, madam?

Har. Be pleased, sir, to let him know, that a lady desires to speak with him.

Will. I shall, madam. [*Exit* WILLIAM.

Har. I wish I could have seen Mrs. Oakly. What an unhappy situation am I reduced to!—I must now, however, solicit Mr. Oakly's protection; a circumstance (all things considered) rather disagreeable to a delicate mind, and which nothing, but the absolute necessity of it, could excuse.

Enter OAKLY.

Oak. [*At entering.*] Where is this lady?—[*Seeing*

her.] Bless me, Miss Russet, is it you?——Was ever any thing so unlucky? [*Aside.*] Is it possible, madam, that I see you here?

Har. It is too true, sir; and the occasion, on which I am now to trouble you, is so much in need of an apology, that——

Oak. Pray make none, madam.—If my wife should return before I get her out of the house again!— [*Aside.*

Har. I dare say, sir, you are not quite a stranger to the attachment your nephew has professed to me.

Oak. I am not, madam.—I hope Charles has not been guilty of any baseness towards you. If he has, I'll never see his face again.

Har. I have no cause to accuse him.—But——

Oak. But what, madam? Pray be quick!——The very person in the world I would not have seen! [*Aside.*

Har. You seem uneasy, sir!

Oak. No, nothing at all—Pray go on, madam.

Har. I am at present, sir, through a concurrence of strange accidents, in a very unfortunate situation, and do not know what will become of me without your assistance.

Oak. I'll do every thing in my power to serve you. I know of your leaving your father, by a letter we have had from him. Pray let me know the rest of your story.

Har. When I left my father's, I came immediately to London, and took refuge with a relation; where, instead of meeting with the protection I expected, I was alarmed with the most infamous designs upon my honour. It is not an hour ago, since your nephew rescued me from the attempts of a villain. I tremble to think, that I left him actually engaged in a duel.

Oak. He is very safe. He has just sent home the chariot from the St. Albans tavern, where he dines

to-day.——But what are your commands for me, madam?

Har. The favour, sir, I would now request of you is, that you would suffer me to remain, for a few days, in your house.

Oak. Madam!

Har. And that, in the mean time, you will use your utmost endeavours to reconcile me to my father, without his forcing me into a marriage with Sir Harry Beagle.

Oak. This is the most perplexing situation!—— Why did not Charles take care to bestow you properly?

Har. It is most probable, sir, that I should not have consented to such a measure myself. The world is but too apt to censure, even without a cause: and if you are so kind as to admit me into your house, I must desire not to consider Mr. Oakly in any other light than as your nephew.

Oak. What an unlucky circumstance!——Upon my soul, madam, I would do any thing to serve you —but being in my house, creates a difficulty that—

Har. I hope, sir, you do not doubt the truth of what I have told you?

Oak. I religiously believe every tittle of it, madam, but I have particular family considerations, that——

Har. Sure, sir, you cannot suspect me to be base enough to form any connexions in your family contrary to your inclinations, while I am living in your house?

Oak. Such connexions, madam, would do me and all my family great honour. I never dreamt of any scruples on that account.—What can I do?—Let me see—let me see—suppose—— [*Pausing.*

Enter MRS. OAKLY *behind.*

Mrs. Oak. I am sure I heard the voice of a woman, conversing with my husband——Ha! [*Seeing*

HARRIET.] It is so, indeed! Let me contain myself—I'll listen.

Har. I see, sir, you are not inclined to serve me—Good Heaven! what am I reserved to?—Why, why did I leave my father's house, to expose myself to greater distresses? [*Ready to weep.*

Oak. I would do any thing for your sake: indeed I would. So pray be comforted, and I'll think of some proper place to bestow you in.

Mrs. Oak. So! so!

Har. What place can be so proper as your own house?

Oak. My dear madam, I——I——

Mrs. Oak. My dear madam!——Mighty well!—

Oak. Hush!—hark!——what noise!——no——nothing. But I'll be plain with you, madam, we may be interrupted.—The family considerations I hinted at, is nothing else than my wife. She is a little unhappy in her temper, madam;—and if you were to be admitted into the house, I don't know what would be the consequence.

Mrs. Oak. Very fine!

Har. My behaviour, sir!——

Oak. My dear life, it would be impossible for you to behave in such a manner, as not to give her suspicion.

Har. But if your nephew, sir, took every thing upon himself——

Oak. Still that would not do, madam!——Why, this very morning, when the letter came from your father, though I positively denied any knowledge of it, and Charles owned it, yet it was almost impossible to pacify her.

Mrs. Oak. The letter!—How I have been bubbled!—

Har. What shall I do?—What will become of me?

Oak. Why, lookye, my dear madam, since my wife

is so strong an objection, it is absolutely impossible for me to take you into the house. Nay, if I had not known she was gone out, just before you came, I should be uneasy at your being here, even now. So we must manage as well as we can.—I'll take a private lodging for you a little way off, unknown to Charles, or my wife, or any body; and if Mrs. Oakly should discover it at last, why the whole matter will light upon Charles, you know.

Mrs. Oak. Upon Charles!

Har. How unhappy is my situation! [*Weeping.*] I am ruined for ever.

Oak. Ruined! Not at all. Such a thing as this has happened to many a young lady before you, and all has been well again——Keep up your spirits! I'll contrive, if I possibly can, to visit you every day.

Mrs. Oak. [*Advancing.*] Will you so? O, Mr. Oakly! have I discovered you at last? I'll visit you, indeed! And you, my dear madam, I'll——

Har. Madam, I don't understand——

Mrs. Oak. I understand the whole affair, and have understood it for some time past.—You shall have a private lodging, miss!——It is the fittest place for you, I believe.——How dare you look me in the face?

Oak. For Heaven's sake, my love, don't be so violent.—You are quite wrong in this affair—you don't know who you are a-talking to. This lady is a person of fashion.

Mrs. Oak. Fine fashion, indeed! to seduce other women's husbands!

Har. Dear madam; how can you imagine——

Oak. I tell you, my dear, this is the young lady that Charles——

Mrs. Oak. Mighty well! but that won't do, sir!—Did not I hear you lay the whole intrigue together? Did not I hear your fine plot of throwing all the blame upon Charles?——

Oak. Nay, be cool a moment.——You must know, my dear, that the letter which came this morning related to this lady——

Mrs. Oak. I know it.

Oak. And since that, it seems, Charles has been so fortunate as to——

Mrs. Oak. O, you deceitful man!——That trick is too stale to pass again with me.——It is plain now what you meant by your proposing to take her into the house this morning.——But the gentlewoman could introduce herself, I see.

Oak. Fie! fie! my dear, she came on purpose to inquire for you.

Mrs. Oak. For me!——better and better!——Did not she watch her opportunity, and come to you just as I went out? But I am obliged to you for your visit, madam. It is sufficiently paid. Pray, don't let me detain you.

Oak. For shame! for shame! Mrs. Oakly! How, can you be so absurd? Is this proper behaviour to a lady of her character!

Mrs. Oak. I have heard her character, and a pretty character it is!—Go, my fine runaway madam! Now you have eloped from your family, and run away from your aunt! Go!——You sha'n't stay here, I promise you.

Oak. Pr'ythee, be quiet. You don't know what you are doing. She shall stay.

Mrs. Oak. She sha'n't stay a minute.

Oak. She shall stay a minute, an hour, a day, a week, a month, a year!——'Sdeath, madam, she shall stay for ever, if I chuse it.

Mrs. Oak. How!

Har. For Heaven's sake, sir, let me go. I am frightened to death.

Oak. Don't be afraid, madam!——She shall stay, I insist upon it.

Rus. [*Within.*] I tell you, sir, I will go up. I

am sure the lady is here, and nothing shall hinder me.

Har. O, my father! my father! [*Faints away.*

Oak. See! she faints. [*Catching her.*

Mrs. Oak. What! take her into your arms too!—I have no patience.

Enter RUSSET.

Rus. Where is this——ha! fainting! [*Running to her.*] O my dear Harriet! my child! my child!

Oak. Your coming so abruptly, shocked her spirits. But she revives. How do you, madam?

Har. [*To* RUSSET.] O, sir!

Rus. O, my dear girl! how could you run away from your father, that loves you with such fondness!——But I was sure I should find you here——

Mrs. Oak. There—there!—sure he should find her here! Did I not tell you so?——Are not you a wicked man, to carry on such base, undermand doings, with a gentleman's daughter?

Rus. Let me tell you, sir, whatever you may think of the matter, I shall not easily put up with this behaviour.—How durst you encourage my daughter to an elopement, and receive her in your house?

Mrs. Oak. There, mind that!——The thing is as plain as the light.

Oak. I tell you, you misunderstand——

Rus. Look you, Mr. Oakly, I shall expect satisfaction from your family for so gross an affront.——Zounds, sir, I am not to be used ill by any man in England.

Oak. Sir, this is all a mistake.

Rus. A mistake! Did not I find her in your house?

Oak. Upon my soul, she has not been in my house above——

Mrs. Oak. Did not I hear you say, you would take her a lodging, a private lodging?

Oak. Yes, but that——

Rus. Has not this affair been carried on a long time in spite of my teeth?

Oak. Sir, I never troubled myself——

Mrs. Oak. Never troubled yourself!—Did not you insist on her staying in the house, whether I would or no?

Oak. No:

Rus. Did not you send to meet her when she came to town?

Oak. No.

Mrs. Oak. Did not you deceive me about the letter this morning?

Oak. No—no—no—I tell you, no.

Mrs. Oak. Yes—yes—yes——I tell you, yes.

Rus. Sha'n't I believe my own eyes?

Mrs. Oak. Sha'n't I believe my own ears?

Oak. I tell you, you are both deceived.

Rus. Zounds, sir, I'll have satisfaction.

Mrs. Oak. I'll stop these fine doings, I warrant you.

Oak. 'Sdeath, you will not let me speak—and you are both alike, I think.—I wish you were married to one another, with all my heart.

Mrs. Oak. Mighty well! mighty well!

Rus. I shall soon find a time to talk with you.

Oak. Find a time to talk! you have talked enough now for all your lives.

Mrs. Oak. Very fine! Come along, sir! Leave that lady with her father. Now she is in the properest hands.

Oak. I wish I could leave you in his hands. [*Going, returns.*] One word with you, sir!——The height of your passion, and Mrs. Oakly's strange misapprehension of this whole affair, makes it impossible to explain matters to you at present. I will do it when you please, and how you please.

Rus. Yes, yes; I'll have satisfaction.——So, ma-

dam! I have found you at last.——You have made a fine confusion here.

Har. I have, indeed, been the innocent cause of a great deal of confusion.

Rus. Innocent!——What business had you to be running hither after——

Har. My dear sir, you misunderstand the whole affair. I have not been in this house half an hour.

Rus. Zounds, girl, don't put me in a passion!——You know I love you——but a lie puts me in a passion. But come along—we'll leave this house directly—[CHARLES, *singing without.*] Hey day! what now?

After a Noise without, enter CHARLES, *drunk.*

Charles. *But my wine neither nurses nor babies can bring,*
And a big-belly'd bottle's a mighty good thing. [Singing.

What's here? a woman? Harriet! impossible! My dearest, sweetest Harriet! I have been looking all over the town for you, and at last——when I was tired——and weary—and disappointed—why, then, the honest Major and I sat down together to drink your health in pint bumpers. [*Running up to her.*

Rus. Stand off!—How dare you take any liberty with my daughter before me? Zounds, sir, I'll be the death of you.

Charles. Ha! 'Squire Russet too!—You jolly old cock, how do you do?—But Harriet! my dear girl! [*Taking hold of her.*] My life, my soul, my——.

Rus. Let her go, sir—come away, Harriet!—Leave him this instant, or I'll tear you asunder. [*Pulling her.*

Har. There needs no violence, to tear me from a man, who could disguise himself in such a gross man-

ner, at a time when he knew I was in the utmost distress. [*Disengages herself, and exit with* RUSSET.

Charles. Only hear me, sir——madam!——my dear Harriet——Mr. Russet—gone!——she's gone! —and, egad, in very ill humour, and in very bad company!——I'll go after her—but hold!—I shall only make it worse—as I did—now I recollect—once before. How the devil came they here?—Who would have thought of finding her in my own house? ——My head turns round with conjectures—I believe I am drunk—very drunk—so, 'egad, I'll e'en go and sleep myself sober, and then inquire the meaning of all this. For,

I love Sue, and Sue loves me, &c.

[Exit, singing.

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

OAKLY'S *House.*

Enter CHARLES *and* MAJOR OAKLY, *meeting.*

Maj. What, Charles!

Charles. O, Major! have you heard of what happen'd after I left you yesterday?

Maj. Heard! yes, yes, I have heard it plain enough.—But, poor Charles, ha! ha! ha!—What a scene of confusion! I would give the world to have been there.

Charles. And I would give the world to have been any where else.——Cursed fortune!—

Maj. To come in so opportunely at the tail of an adventure!—Was not your mistress mighty glad to see you? You was very fond of her, I dare say.

Charles. I am upon the rack.—Who can tell what rudeness, I might offer her!—I can remember nothing—I deserve to lose her—to make myself a beast! and at such a time too—O! fool! fool! fool!

Maj. Pr'ythee, be quiet, Charles!—never vex yourself about nothing: this will all be made up the first time you see her.

Charles. I should dread to see her—and yet the not knowing where she is distracts me—her father may force her to marry Sir Harry Beagle immediately.

Maj. Not he, I promise you.—She'd run plum into your arms first, in spite of her father's teeth.

Charles. But then her father's violence, and the mildness of her disposition—

Maj. Mildness! ridiculous!—Trust to the spirit of the sex in her.—I warrant you, like all the rest, she'll have perverseness enough not to do as her father would have her.

Charles. Well—well—but then my behaviour to her—to expose myself in such a condition to her again!—The very occasion of our former quarrel!

Maj. Quarrel! ha! ha! ha!—What signifies a quarrel with a mistress?—Why, the whole affair of making love, as they call it, is nothing but quarrelling and making it up again.—They quarrel o' purpose to kiss, and be friends.

Charles. Then indeed, things seem'd to be taking a fortunate turn—To renew our difference at such a time!—Just when I had some reason to hope for a reconciliation!—May wine be my poison if ever I am drunk again!

Maj. Ay, ay, so every man says, the next morning.

Enter WILLIAM.

Will. A gentleman, sir, that calls himself Captain O'Cutter, desires to speak with you.

Charles. Don't trouble me——I'll see nobody——I'm not at home——

Will. The gentleman says, he has very particular business, and he must see you.

Charles. What's his name? Who did you say?

Will. Captain O'Cutter, sir.

Charles. Captain O'Cutter! I never heard of him before. Do you know any thing of him, Major?

Maj. Not I——But you hear he has particular business. I'll leave the room.

Charles. He can have no business that need be a secret to you.—Desire the Captain to walk up.

[*Exit* WILLIAM.

Enter CAPTAIN O'CUTTER.

O'Cut. Jontlemen, your sarvant. Is either of your names Charles Oakly, Esq.?

Charles. Charles Oakly, sir, is my name, if you have any business with it.

O'Cut. Avast, avast, my dear!—I have a little business with your name, but as I was to let nobody know it I can't mention it till you clear the decks, 'fait.— [*Pointing to the* MAJOR.

Charles. This gentleman, sir, is my most intimate friend, and any thing that concerns me may be mentioned before him.

O'Cut. O, if he's your friend, my dear, we may do all above-board. It's only about your deciding a deferance with my Lord Trinket. He wants to show you a little warm work; and, as I was steering this way, he desired me to fetch you this letter.

[*Giving a letter.*

Maj. How, sir, a challenge!

O'Cut. Yes, 'fait, a challenge. I am to be his lordship's second; and, if you are fond of a hot birth, and will come along with that jontleman, we'll all go to it together, and make a little line of battle a-head of our own, my dear.

Charles. [*Reading.*] Ha! what's this? This may be useful. [*Aside.*

Maj. Sir, I am infinitely obliged to you.—A rare fellow this! [*Aside.*]—Yes, yes, I'll meet all the good company. I'll be there in my waistcoat and pumps, and take a morning's breathing with you. Are you very fond of fighting, sir?

O'Cut. Indeed, and I am; I love it better than grog.

Maj. But pray, sir, how are you interested in this difference? Do you know what it is about?

O'Cut. O, the devil burn me, not I. What signifies what it's about, you know? so we do but tilt a little.

Maj. What! fight, and not know for what?

O'Cut. When the signal's out for engaging, what signifies talking?

Maj. I fancy, sir, a duel's a common breakfast with you. I'll warrant, now, you have been engaged in many such affairs.

O'Cut. Upon my shoul, and I have: sea or land, it's all one to little Terence O'Cutter.—When I was last in Dublin, I fought one jontleman for cheating me out of a tousand pounds; I fought two of the Mermaid's crew about Sally Macquire; tree about politics; and one about the Playhouse in Smock Alley. But, upon my fait, since I am in England, I have done noting at all at all.

Charles. This is lucky—but my transport will discover me. [*Aside.*]—Will you be so kind, sir, [*To* O'CUTTER.] as to make my compliments to his lordship, and assure him, that I shall do myself the honour of waiting on him.

O'Cut. Indeed, and I will.—Arrah, my dear, won't you come too? [*To* MAJOR OAKLY.

Maj. Depend upon it. We'll go through the whole exercise, carte, tierce, and sogoon, Captain!

Charles. Now to get my intelligence. [*Aside.*]—I think the time, sir, his lordship appoints in his letter, is—a—

O'Cut. You say right——Six o'clock.

Charles. And the place—a—a—is——I think, behind Montague House.

O'Cut. No, my dear!——Avast, by the Ring in Hyde Park, 'fait——I settled it there myself, for fare of interruption.

Charles. True, as you say, the Ring in Hyde Park—I had forgot—Very well, I'll not fail you, sir.

O'Cut. Devil burn me, nor I. Upon my shoul, little Terence O'Cutter will see fair play, or he'll know the reason—And so, my dear, your sarvant.—[*Exit.*

Maj. Ha! ha! ha! What a fellow!——He loves fighting like a game cock.

Charles. O, uncle, the luckiest thing in the world!

Maj. What, to have the chance of being run through the body! I desire no such good fortune!

Charles. Wish me joy, wish me joy! I have found her, my dear girl, my Harriet!——She is at an inn in Holborn, Major!

Maj. Ay! how do you know?

Charles. Why, this dear, delightful, charming, blundering captain, has delivered me a wrong letter.

Maj. A wrong letter!

Charles. Yes, a letter from Lord Trinket to Lady Freelove.

Maj. The devil! What are the contents?

Charles. The news I told you just now, that she's at an inn in Holborn:—and besides, an excuse from my lord, for not waiting on her ladyship this morning,

according to his promise, as he shall be entirely taken up with his design upon Harriet.

Maj. So!—so!—A plot between the lord and the lady.

Charles. What his plot is I don't know, but I shall beg leave to be made a party in it: so perhaps his lordship and I may meet, and decide our deferance, as the captain calls it, before to-morrow morning.—There! read, read, man! [*Giving the letter.*

Maj. [*Reading.*] Um—um—um—Very fine! And what do you purpose doing?

Charles. To go thither immediately.

Maj. Then you shall take me with you. Who knows what his lordship's designs may be? I begin to suspect foul play.

Charles. No, no; pray mind your own business. If I find there is any need of your assistance, I'll send for you.

Maj. You'll manage this affair like a boy, now—Go on rashly with noise and bustle, and fury, and get yourself into another scrape.

Charles. No—no—Let me alone; I'll go *incog.*—Leave my chariot at some distance—Proceed prudently, and take care of myself, I warrant you. I did not imagine that I should ever rejoice at receiving a challenge, but this is the most fortunate accident that could possibly have happened. B'ye, b'ye, uncle! [*Exit hastily.*

Maj. I don't half approve of this—and yet I can hardly suspect his lordship of any very deep designs neither.—Charles may easily outwit him. Harkye, William! [*At seeing* WILLIAM *at some distance.*

Enter WILLIAM.

Will. Sir!

Maj. Where's my brother?

Will. In his study, alone, sir.

Maj. And how is he, William?

Will. Pretty well, I believe, sir.

Maj. Ay, ay, but is he in good humour, or——

Will. I never meddle in family affairs, not I, sir.

[*Exit.*

Maj. Well said, William!——No bad hint for me, perhaps!—What a strange world we live in! No two people in it love one another better than my brother and sister, and yet the bitterest enemies could not torment each other more heartily.——Ah, if he had but half my spirit!——And yet he don't want it neither—But I know his temper——He pieces out the matter with maxims, and scraps of philosophy; and odds and ends of sentences—I must live in peace—Patience is the best remedy—Any thing for a quiet life! and so on——However, yesterday, to give him his due, he behaved like a man. Keep it up, brother! keep it up! or it's all over with you. Since mischief is on foot, I'll e'en set it forwards on all sides. I'll in to him directly, read him one of my morning lectures, and persuade him, if I possibly can, to go out with me immediately; or work him up to some open act of rebellion against the sovereign authority of his lady-wife. Zounds, brother! rant, and roar, and rave, and turn the house out of the window. If I was a husband!——'Sdeath, what a pity it is that nobody knows how to manage a wife but a bachelor.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

The Bull and Gate Inn.

Enter HARRIET.

Har. What will become of me? My father is en-

raged, and deaf to all remonstrances, and here I am to remain by his positive orders, to receive this booby Baronet's odious addresses. Among all my distresses, I must confess that Charles's behaviour yesterday is not the least. So wild! So given up to excesses! And yet—I am ashamed to own it even to myself—I love him: and death itself shall not prevail on me to give my hand to Sir Harry—But here he comes! What shall I do with him?

Enter SIR HARRY BEAGLE.

Sir H. Your servant, miss!——What! Not speak! ——Bashful, mayhap—Why then I will—Lookye, miss, I am a man of few words.—What signifies haggling? It looks just like a dealer,—What d'ye think of me for a husband?—I am a tight young fellow—sound wind and limb—free from all natural blemishes —Rum all over, damme.

Har. Sir, I don't understand you. Speak English, and I'll give you an answer.

Sir H. English! Why so I do—and good plain English too.—What d'ye think of me for a husband? —That's English—e'nt it?——I know none of your French lingo, none of your *parleyvoos*, not I.—What d'ye think of me for a husband? The 'squire says, you shall marry me.

Har. What shall I say to him? I had best be civil. [*Aside.*]——I think, sir, you deserve a much better wife, and beg——

Sir H. Better! No, no,—though you're so knowing, I'm not to be taken in so.——You're a fine thing ——Your points are all good.

Har. Sir Harry! Sincerity is above all ceremony. Excuse me, if I declare I will never be your wife. Shall I beseech you, sir, to persuade my father not to urge a marriage, to which I am determined never to consent?

Sir H. Hey! how! what! be off!——Why, it's a match, miss!——It's done and done on both sides.

Har. For Heaven's sake, sir, withdraw your claim to me.——I never can be prevail'd on——indeed I can't——

Sir H. What, make a match and then draw stakes! That's doing of nothing—Play or pay all the world over.

Har. Let me prevail on you, sir.—I am determined not to marry you, at all events.

Sir H. But your father's determined you shall, miss.—So the odds are on my side.—I am not quite sure of my horse, but I have the rider hollow.

Har. Your horse! sir—d'ye take me for—but I forgive you.—I beseech you, come into my proposal. It will be better for us both in the end.

Sir H. I can't be off.

Har. Let me intreat you.

Sir H. I tell you, it's impossible.

Har. Pray, pray do, sir.

Sir H. I can't, damme.

Har. I beseech you. [SIR HARRY *whistles.*] How! laughed at?

Sir H. *Will you marry me, Dear Ally, Ally Croker?* [Singing.

Har. Marry you? I had rather be married to a slave, a wretch——You! [*Walks about.*

Sir H. A fine going thing.——She has a deal of foot——treads well upon her pasterns—goes above her ground——

Har. Peace, wretch!—Do you talk to me as if I were your horse?

Sir H. Horse! Why not speak of my horse? If your fine ladies had half as many good qualities, they would be much better bargains.

Har. And if their wretches of husbands liked them half so well as they do their horses, they would lead better lives.

Sir H. Mayhap so.——But what signifies talking to you?——The 'squire shall know your tricks.——He'll doctor you.——I'll go and talk to him.

Har. Go any where, so that you go from me.

Sir H. He'll break you in—If you won't go in a snaffle, you must be put in a curb——He'll break you, damme. [*Exit.*

Har. A wretch!——But I was to blame to suffer his brutal conduct to ruffle my temper.—I could expect nothing else from him, and he is below my anger!

Enter RUSSET.

Rus. Are not you a sad girl? a perverse, stubborn, obstinate——

Har. My dear sir——

Rus. Lookye, Harriet, don't speak,——you'll put me in a passion——Will you have him?——Answer me that—Why don't the girl speak?—Will you have him?

Har. Dearest sir, there is nothing in the world else——

Rus. Why there!—there!——Lookye there!—Zounds, you shall have him——Hussy, you shall have him——You shall marry him to-night——Did not you promise to receive him civilly?——How came you to affront him?

Har. Sir, I did receive him very civilly; but his behaviour was so insolent and insupportable——

Rus. Insolent!—Zounds, I'll blow his brains out.——Insolent to my dear Harriet!—A rogue, a villain! a scoundrel! I'll—but it's a lie—I know it's a lie—He durst not behave insolent—Will you have him? Answer me that. Will you have him?——Zounds, you shall have him.

Har. If you have any love for me, sir,——

Rus. Love for you!—You know I love you—You

know your poor fond father dotes on you to madness. ——I would not force you, if I did not love you.—Don't I want you to be happy?——But I know what you would have. You want young Oakly, a rake-helly drunken——

Har. Release me from Sir Harry, and if ever I marry against your consent, renounce me for ever.

Rus. I *will* renounce you, unless you'll have Sir Harry.

Har. Consider, my dear sir, you'll make me miserable.

Rus. You'll break my heart, Harriet, you'll break my heart——Make you miserable!—Don't I want to make you happy? Is not he the richest man in the county?

Har. For Heaven's sake, sir——

Rus. Hold your tongue, Harriet!—I'll hear none of your nonsense.——You shall have him, I tell you, you shall have him——He shall marry you this very night——I'll go for a license and a parson immediately. Zounds! Why do I stand arguing with you? An't I your father? Have not I a right to dispose of you? You shall have him.

Har. Sir!——

Rus. I won't hear a word. You shall have him. [*Exit.*

Har. Sir!—Hear me!—but one word!—He will not hear me, and is gone to prepare for this odious marriage. I will die before I consent to it. You *shall* have him! O that fathers would enforce their commands by better arguments!—

Enter CHARLES.

Ha! What do I see! [*Screaming.*

Charles. Peace, my love!—My dear life, make no noise!—I have been hovering about the house this hour——I just now saw your father and Sir Harry

go out, and have seized this precious opportunity to throw myself at your feet. You can't imagine what I suffer, and have suffered since last night —And yet, I have, in some fond moments, flatter'd myself, that the service I was so fortunate as to do you at Lady Freelove's, would plead a little in my favour.

Har. You may remember, sir, that you took a very early opportunity of cancelling that obligation.

Charles. O my Harriet!—Upbraid me, reproach me, do any thing but look and talk with that air of coldness and indifference.—Must I lose you for one offence? When my soul doats on you! When I love you to distraction!

Har. Did it appear like love, your conduct yesterday?

Charles. Abandon me, if ever I am guilty of it again.—O, Harriet!—I am distracted with ten thousand fears and apprehensions of losing you for ever. —The chambermaid, whom I bribed to admit me to you, told me, that when the two gentlemen went out, they talked of a license.—What am I to think? Is it possible that you can resign yourself to Sir Harry Beagle?—[HARRIET *pauses.*] Can you then consent to give your hand to another?—No, let me once more deliver you—Let us seize this lucky moment—My chariot stands at the corner of the next street—Let me gently force you, while their absence allows it, and convey you from the brutal violence of a constrained marriage.

Har. No!—I will wait the event, be it what it may.—O, Charles, they sha'n't force me to marry Sir Harry—But, your behaviour—not half an hour ago, my father reproach'd me with the looseness of your character. [*Weeping.*]

Charles. I see my folly, and am ashamed of it.— You have reclaimed me, Harriet!—On my soul, you have.—If all women were as yourself, to the morals

of their lovers, a libertine would be an uncommon character.—But let me persuade you to leave this place while you may.—Major Oakly will receive us at his house with pleasure.

Har. No, I am determin'd to remain! To leave my father again, to go off openly with a man, of whose libertine character he has himself so lately been a witness, would justify his anger, and impeach my reputation.

Charles. Consider, my angel!——

Har. I do consider, that your conduct has made it absolutely improper for me to trust myself to your care.

Charles. My conduct!—Vexation! 'Sdeath!—— But then, my dear Harriet, the danger you are in, the necessity——

Enter CHAMBERMAID.

Chamb. O law, ma'am!——Such a terrible accident!——As sure as I am here, there's a press-gang has seized the two gemmin, and is carrying them away, thof so be one an 'em says as how he's a knight and baronight, and that t'other's a 'squire and a house-keeper.

Har. Seized by a press-gang! impossible.

Charles. O, now the design comes out.——But I'll baulk his lordship.

Chamb. Lack-a-daisy, ma'am, what can we do? There is master, and John Ostler, and Bootcatcher, all gone a'ter 'em.——There is such an uproar as never was! [*Exit.*

Har. If I thought this was your contrivance, sir, I would never speak to you again.

Charles. I would sooner die than be guilty of it.—This is Lord Trinket's doing, I am sure. I knew he had some scheme in agitation, by a letter I intercepted this morning. [HARRIET *screams.*] Ha! Here

he comes. Nay then, it's plain enough. Don't be frightened, my love! I'll protect you.—But now I must desire you to follow my directions.

Enter LORD TRINKET.

Lord T. Now, madam.——Pox on't, he here again!——Nay, then, [*Drawing.*] come, sir! You're unarmed, I see. Give up the lady: give her up, I say, or I am through you in a twinkling.

[*Going to make a pass at* CHARLES.

Charles. Keep your distance, my lord! I have arms. [*Producing a pistol.*] If you come a foot nearer, you have a brace of balls through your lordship's head.

Lord T. How? what's this? pistols!

Charles. At your lordship's service.——Sword and pistol, my lord.——Those, you know, are our weapons.——If this misses, I have the fellow to it in my pocket.——Don't be frightened, madam. His lordship has removed your friends and relations, but he will take great care of you. Shall I leave you with him?

Har. Cruel Charles! You know I must go with you now.

Charles. A little way from the door, if your lordship pleases. [*Waving his hand.*

Lord T. Sir!—'Sdeath!—Madam——!

Charles. A little more round, my lord. [*Waving.*

Lord T. But, sir!—Mr. Oakly!

Charles. I have no leisure to talk with your lordship now.——A little more that way, if you please. [*Waving.*]—You know where I live.——If you have any commands for Miss Russet, you will hear of her too at my house.——Nay, keep back, my lord [*Presenting.*] Your lordship's most obedient humble servant. [*Exit with* HARRIET.

Lord T. [*Looking after them, and pausing for a short time.*]——I cut a mighty ridiculous figure here, 'pon honour. [*Exit.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

LADY FREELOVE'S *House.*

Enter LORD TRINKET, LADY FREELOVE, *with a Letter, and* CAPTAIN O'CUTTER.

Lord T. Was ever any thing so unfortunate! Plague on't, Captain, how could you make such a strange blunder?

O'Cut. I never tought of a blunder. I was to daliver two letters, and if I gave them one apiece, I thought it would do.

Lady F. And so, my lord, the ingenious Captain gave the letter intended for me to young Oakly, and here has brought me a challenge.

Lord T. Ridiculous! Never was any thing so *mal-apropos.*——Did you read the direction, Captain?

O'Cut. Who, me!——Devil burn me, not I. I never rade at all.

Lord T. 'Sdeath! how provoking! When I had secured the servants, and got all the people out of the way—When every thing was *en train.*

Lady F. Nay, never despair, my lord! Things have happen'd unluckily, to be sure; and yet I think I could hit upon a method to set every thing to rights again.

Lord T. How? how? my dear Lady Freelove, how?

Lady F. Suppose then your lordship was to go and deliver these country gentlemen from their confine-

ment; make them believe it was a plot of young Oakly's to carry off my niece; and so make a merit of your own services with the father.

Lord T. Admirable! I'll about it immediately.

O'Cut. Has your lordship any occasion for my sarvice in this expedition?

Lord T. O no:——Only release me these people, and then keep out of the way, dear Captain.

O'Cut. With all my heart, 'fait. But you are all wrong:—this will not signify a brass farding. If you would let me alone, I would give him a salt eel, I warrant you.——But upon my credit, there's noting to be done without a little tilting. [*Exit.*

Lord T. But where shall I carry them, when I have delivered them?

Lady F. To Mr. Oakly's, by all means. You may be sure my niece is there.

Lord T. To Mr. Oakly's!——Why, does your ladyship consider? 'Tis going directly in the fire of the enemy——throwing the *dementi* full in their teeth.

Lady F. So much the better. Face your enemies:—nay, you shall outface them too. Why, where's the difference between truths and untruths, if you do but stick close to the point?—Falsehood would scarce ever be detected, if we had confidence enough to support it.

Lord T. Nay, I don't want bronze upon occasion—but to go amongst a whole troop of people, sure to contradict every word I say, is so dangerous.

Lady F. To leave Russet alone amongst them, would be ten times more dangerous.—You may be sure that Oakly's will be the first place he will go to after his daughter—Where, if you don't accompany him, he will be open to all their suggestions. They'll be all in one story, and nobody there to contradict them, and then their dull truth would triumph, which

must not be. No, no,——positively, my lord, you must battle it out.

Lord T. Well, I'll go, 'pon honour——and if I could depend on your ladyship as a *corps de reserve*—

Lady F. I'll certainly meet you there. Tush! my lord, there's nothing in it.—It's hard, indeed, if two persons of condition can't bear themselves out against such trumpery folks as the family of the Oakly's.

Lord T. Odious low people!—But I lose time—I must after the captain—And so, till we meet at Mr. Oakly's, I kiss your ladyship's hands—You won't fail me.

Lady F. You may depend on me. [*Exit* LORD TRINKET.]—So, here is fine work! this artful little hussy has been too much for us all. Well, what's to be done? Why, when a woman of fashion gets into a scrape, nothing but a fashionable assurance can get her out of it again. I'll e'en go boldly to Mr. Oakly's, as I have promised, and if it appears practicable, I will forward Lord Trinket's match; but if I find, that matters have taken another turn, his lordship must excuse me. In that case I'll fairly drop him, seem a perfect stranger to all his intentions, and give my visit an air of congratulation to my niece and any other husband, which fortune, her wise father, or her ridiculous self, has provided for her. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

MRS. OAKLY'S *Dressing Room.*

Enter MRS. OAKLY.

Mrs. Oak. This is worse and worse!——He never

held me so much in contempt before.——To go out without speaking to me, or taking the least notice.—I am obliged to the Major for this.——How could he take him out? and how could Mr. Oakly go with him?——

Enter TOILET.

Mrs. Oak. Well, Toilet.

Toil. My master is not come back yet, ma'am.

Mrs. Oak. Where is he gone?

Toil. I don't know, I can assure your ladyship.

Mrs. Oak. Why don't you know?—You know nothing.—But I warrant you know well enough, if you would tell.—You shall never persuade me but you knew of Mr. Oakly's going out to-day.

Toil. I wish I may die, ma'am, upon my honour, and I protest to your ladyship, I knew nothing in the world of the matter, no more than the child unborn. There is Mr. Paris, my master's gentleman, knows—

Mrs. Oak. What does he know?

Toil. That I knew nothing at all of the matter.

Mrs. Oak. Where is Paris? What is he doing?

Toil. He is in my master's room, ma'am.

Mrs. Oak. Bid him come here.

Toil. Yes, ma'am. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Oak. He is certainly gone after this young flirt.—His confidence and the Major's insolence provoke me beyond expression.

Enter TOILET *and* PARIS.

Where's your master?

Par. *Il est sorti.*

Mrs. Oak. Where is he gone?

Par. Ah, madame, *je n'en sçai rien.* I know nothing of it.

Mrs. Oak. Nobody knows any thing. Why did not you tell me he was going out?

Par. I dress him—*Je ne m'en soucie pas de plus*—He go where he will—I have no bisness with it.

Mrs. Oak. Yes, you should have told me——that was your business——and if you don't mind your business better, you shan't stay here, I can tell you, sir.

Par. *Voila! quelque chose d'extraordinaire!*

Mrs. Oak. Don't stand jabbering and shrugging your shoulders, but go, and inquire——go——and bring me word where he is gone.

Par. I don't know what I am do.——I'll ask John.——

Mrs. Oak. Bid John come to me.

Par. *De tout mon cœur.——Jean! ici! Jean——* speak my ladi. [*Exit.*

Mrs. Oak. Impudent fellow! Toilet!

Toil. Ma'am.

Mrs. Oak. Where's John? Why don't he come? Why do you stand with your hands before you! Why don't you fetch him?

Toil. Yes, ma'am, I'll go this minute.——O here, John! my lady wants you.

Enter JOHN.

Mrs. Oak. Where's your master?

John. Gone out, madam.

Mrs. Oak. Why did not you go with him?

John. Because he went out in the Major's chariot, madam.

Mrs. Oak. Where did they go to?

John. To the Major's, I suppose, madam.

Mrs. Oak. Suppose! Don't you know?

John. I believe so, but can't tell for certain, indeed, madam.

Mrs. Oak. Believe, and suppose!—and don't know, and can't tell!——You are all fools.——Go about your business. [JOHN *going.*] Come here. [*Returns.*]

Go to the Major's,—no,—it does not signify—go along—[JOHN *going.*]—Yes, harkye, [*Returns.*] go to the Major's and see if your master is there.

John. Give your compliments, madam?

Mrs. Oak. My compliments, blockhead! Get along [JOHN *going.*] Come hither. [*Returns.*] Can't you go to the Major's and bring me word if Mr. Oakly is there, without taking any further notice?

John. Yes, ma'am.

Mrs. Oak. Well, why don't you go, then? And make haste back.——And, d'ye hear, John!

[JOHN *going, returns.*

John. Madam.

Mrs. Oak. Nothing at all—go along—[JOHN *goes.*] How uneasy Mr. Oakly makes me!—Harkye, John!

[JOHN *returns.*

John. Madam!

Mrs. Oak. Send the porter here.

John. Yes, madam. [*Exit.*

Toil. So, she's in a rare humour! I shall have a fine time on't—[*Aside.*]——Will your ladyship chuse to dress?

Mrs. Oak. Pr'ythee, creature, don't tease me with your fiddle-faddle stuff—I have a thousand things to think of.——Where is the porter? why has not that booby sent him? What is the meaning——

Enter JOHN.

John. Madam, my master is this moment returned, with Major Oakly, and my young master, and the lady that was here yesterday.

Mrs. Oak. Very well. [*Exit* JOHN.] Returned—yes, truly, he is returned—and in a very extraordinary manner. This is setting me at open defiance. But I'll go down and shew them I have too much spirit to endure such usage.—[*Going.*] Or, stay—I'll not go amongst his company—I'll go out——Toilet!

Toil. Ma'am!

Mrs. Oak. Order the coach; I'll go out [TOILET *going.*] Toilet, stay,—I'll e'en go down to them——No——Toilet!

Toil. Ma'am!

Mrs. Oak. Order me a boiled chicken——I'll not go down to dinner——I'll dine in my own room, and sup there——I'll not see his face these three days. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

Another Room.

Enter OAKLY, MAJOR OAKLY, CHARLES, *and* HARRIET.

Charles. My dear Harriet, do not make yourself so uneasy.

Har. Alas! I have too much cause for my uneasiness. Who knows what that vile lord has done with my father?

Oak. Be comforted, madam; we shall soon hear of Mr. Russet, and all will be well, I dare say.

Har. You are too good to me, sir; But I can assure you, sir, I am not a little concerned on your account as well as my own; and if I did not flatter myself with the hopes of explaining every thing to Mrs. Oakly's satisfaction, I should never forgive myself, for having disturbed the peace of such a worthy family.

Maj. Don't mind that, madam: they'll be very good friends again. This is nothing among married people——'Sdeath, here she is!—No,—it's only Mrs. Toilet.

Enter TOILET.

Oak. Well, Toilet, what now? [TOILET *whispers.*] Not well?—Can't come down to dinner?—Wants to see me above?—Harkye, brother, what shall I do?

Maj. If you go, you are undone.

Har. Go, sir, go to Mrs. Oakly——Indeed you had better——

Maj. 'Sdeath, brother, don't budge a foot—This is all fractiousness and ill humour——

Oak. No, I'll not go—Tell her, I have company, and we shall be glad to see her here.

[*Exit* TOILET.

Maj. That's right.

Oak. Suppose I go and watch how she proceeds?

Maj. What d'ye mean? You would not go to her? are you mad?

Oak. By no means go to her—I only want to know how she takes it. I'll lie *perdue*, in my study, and observe her motions.

Maj. I don't like this pitiful ambuscade work—this bush fighting. Why can't you stay here?—Ay ay!—I know how it will be——She'll come bounce in upon you with a torrent of anger and passion, or, if necessary, a whole flood of tears, and carry all before her at once.

Oak. You shall find that you are mistaken, Major. Don't imagine, that because I wish not to be void of humanity, that I am destitute of resolution. Now I am convinced I'm in the right, I'll support that right with ten times your steadiness.

Maj. You talk this well, brother.

Oak. I'll do it well, brother.

Maj. If you don't, you are undone.

Oak. Never fear, never fear. [*Exit.*

Maj. Well, Charles.

Charles. I can't bear to see my Harriet so uneasy.

I'll go immediatcly in quest of Mr. Russet. Perhaps I may learn at the inn where his lordship's ruffians have carried him.

Rus. [*Without.*] Here! Yes, yes, I know she's here well enough. Come along, Sir Harry, come along.

Har. He's here!—My father, I know his voice. Where is Mr. Oakly?—O, now, good sir, [*To the* MAJOR.] do but pacify him, and you'll be a friend indeed.

Enter RUSSET, LORD TRINKET, *and* SIR HARRY BEAGLE.

Lord T. There, sir—I told you it was so!

Rus. Ay, ay, it is too plain.——O you provoking slut! Elopement after elopement!—And at last to have your father carried off by violence! to endanger my life! Zounds! I am so angry, I dare not trust myself within reach of you.

Charles. I can assure you, sir, that your daughter is entirely——

Rus. You assure me? You are the fellow that has perverted her mind——That has set my own child against me.——

Charles. If you will but hear me, sir—

Rus. I won't hear a word you say. I'll have my daughter——I won't hear a word.

Maj. Nay, Mr. Russet, hear reason. If you will but have patience—

Rus. I'll have no patience, I'll have my daughter, and she shall marry Sir Harry to-night.

Lord T. That is dealing rather too much *en cavalier* with me, Mr. Russet, 'pon honour. You take no notice of my pretensions, though my rank and family—

Rus. What care I for rank and family? I don't want to make my daughter a rantipole woman of qua-

lity. I'll give her to whom I please. Take her away, Sir Harry.

Maj. Only three words, Mr. Russet.——

Rus. Why don't the booby take her?

Sir H. Hold hard! Hold hard! You are all on a wrong scent; Hold hard! I say, hold hard!—Harkye, Squire Russet.

Rus. Well? what now?

Sir H. It was proposed, you know, to match me with Miss Harriet——But she can't take kindly to me.——When one has made a bad bet, it is best to hedge off, you know—and so I have e'en swopped her with Lord Trinket here for his brown horse, Nabob, that he bought of Lord Whistle Jacket, for fifteen hundred guineas.

Rus. Swopped her? Swopped my daughter for a horse! Zounds, sir, what d'ye mean?

Sir H. Mean? Why I mean to be off, to be sure —It won't do—I tell you, it won't do——First of all I knocked up myself and my horses, when they took for London—and now I have been stewed aboard a tender—I have wasted three stone at least——If I could have rid my match it would not have grieved me——And so, as I said before, I have swopped her for Nabob.

Rus. The devil take Nabob, and yourself, and Lord Trinket, and—

Lord T. *Pardon! je vous 'demande pardon, Monsieur* Russet, 'pon honour.

Rus. Death and the devil! I shall go distracted! My daughter plotting against me—the——

Maj. Come, come, Mr. Russet, I am your man after all. Give me but a moment's hearing, and I'll engage to make peace between you and your daughter, and throw the blame where it ought to fall most deservedly.

Sir H. Ay, ay, that's right. Put the saddle on the right horse, my buck!

Rus. Well, sir,—What d'ye say?—Speak——I don't know what to do.

Maj. I'll speak the truth, let who will be offended by it.—I have proof presumptive and positive for you, Mr. Russet. From his lordship's behaviour at Lady Freelove's, when my nephew rescued her, we may fairly conclude that he would stick at no measures to carry his point—there's proof presumptive. —But, sir, we can give you proof positive too—proof under his lordship's own hand, that he, likewise, was the contriver of the gross affront that has just been offered you.

Rus. Hey! how?

Lord T. Every syllable romance, 'pon honour.

Maj. Gospel, every word on't.

Charles. This letter will convince you, sir! In consequence of what happened at Lady Freelove's, his lordship thought fit to send me a challenge; but the messenger blundered, and gave me this letter instead of it. [*Giving the Letter.*] I have the case which inclosed it in my pocket.

Lord T. Forgery from beginning to end, 'pon honour.

Maj. Truth upon my honour,—But read, read, Mr. Russet, read and be convinced.

Rus. Let me see—Let me see—[*Reading*]—Um —um—um—um—so, so!—um—um—um—damnation!—*Wish me success, obedient Slave—Trinket* ——Fire and fury! How dare you do this?

Lord T. When you are cool, Mr. Russet, I will explain this matter to you.

Rus. Cool! 'Sdeath and hell!—I'll never be cool again—I'll be revenged.—So my Harriet, my dear girl, is innocent at last. Say so, my Harriet; tell me, you are innocent. [*Embracing her.*

Har. I am, indeed, sir, and happy beyond expression, at your being convinced of it.

Rus. I am glad on't—I am glad on't—I believe you, Harriet!—You was always a good girl.

Maj. So she is, an excellent girl!—Worth a regiment of such lords and baronets—Come, sir, finish every thing handsomely at once.——Come, Charles will have a handsome fortune.

Rus. Marry!—She durst not do it.

Maj. Consider, sir, they have long been fond of each other—old acquaintance—faithful lovers—turtles—and may be very happy.

Rus. Well, well—since things are so——I love my girl.—Harkye, Young Oakly, if you don't make her a good husband, you'll break my heart, you rogue.

Charles. Do not doubt it, sir! my Harriet has reformed me altogether.

Rus. Has she?—Why then—there—Heaven bless you both—there—now there's an end on't.

Sir H. So, my lord, you and I are both distanced—A hollow thing damme.

Lord T. N' importe.

Sir H. [*Aside.*] Now this stake is drawn, my lord may be for hedging off, mayhap. Ecod! I'll go to Jack Speed's, and secure Nabob, and be out of town in an hour. Soho! Lady Freelove! Yoics! [*Exit.*

Enter LADY FREELOVE.

Lady F. My dear Miss Russet, you'll excuse—

Charles. Mrs. Oakly, at your ladyship's service.

Lady F. Married?

Har. Not yet, madam; but my father has been so good as to give his consent.

Lady F. I protest I am prodigiously glad of it. My dear, I give you joy—and you, Mr. Oakly.—I wish you joy, Mr. Russet, and all the good company—for I think the most of them are parties concerned.

Maj. How easy, impudent, and familiar! [*Aside.*

Lady F. Lord Trinket here too! I vow I did not see your lordship before.

Lord T. Your ladyship's most obedient slave.
[*Bowing.*

Lady F. You seem grave, my lord! Come, come, I know there has been some difference between you and Mr. Oakly—You must give me leave to be a mediator in this affair.

Lord T. Here has been a small fracas, to be sure, madam!—We are all blown, 'pon honour.

Lady F. Blown! what do you mean, my lord?

Lord T. Nay, your ladyship knows that I never mind these things, and I know that they never discompose your ladyship—But things have happened a little *en travers*—The little billet I sent your ladyship has fallen into the hands of that gentleman—[*Pointing to* CHARLES.]—and so—there has been a little *brouillerie* about it—that's all.

Lady F. You talk to me, my lord, in a very extraordinary style—If you have been guilty of any misbehaviour, I am sorry for it; but your ill conduct can fasten no imputation on me.—Miss Russet will justify me sufficiently.

Maj. Had not your lordship better appeal to my friend Charles here?—The letter, Charles!——Out with it this instant!

Charles. Yes, I have the credentials of her ladyship's integrity in my pocket.——Mr. Russet, the letter you read a little while ago was inclosed in this cover, which also I now think it my duty to put into your hands.

Rus. [Reading.] *To the Right Honourable Lady Freelove*——'Sdeath and hell!—and now I recollect, the letter itself was pieced with scraps of French, and madam, and your ladyship—Fire and fury! madam, how came you to use me so? I am obliged to you, then, for the insult that has been offered me!

Lady F. What is all this? Your obligations to me, Mr. Russet, are of a nature, that——

Rus. Fine obligations! I dare say, I am partly

obliged to you, too, for the attempt on my daughter by that thing of a lord yonder at your house. Zounds, madam! these are injuries never to be forgiven——They are the grossest affronts to me and my family—All the world shall know them—Zounds! —I'll——

Lady F. Mercy on me! how boisterous are these country gentlemen! Why, really, Mr. Russet, you rave like a man in Bedlam—I am afraid you'll beat me—and then you swear most abominably.——How can you be so vulgar?——I see the meaning of this low malice—But the reputations of women of quality are not so easily impeached—My rank places me above the scandal of little people, and I shall meet such petty insolence with the greatest ease and tranquillity. But you and your simple girl will be the sufferers.——I had some thoughts of introducing her into the first company—But now, madam, I shall neither receive nor return your visits, and will entirely withdraw my protection from the ordinary part of the family. [*Exit.*

Rus. Zounds, what impudence! that's worse than all the rest.

Lord T. Fine presence of mind, faith!—The true French *nonchalance*——But, good folks, why such a deal of rout and *tapage* about nothing at all?——If Mademoiselle Harriet had rather be Mrs. Oakly than Lady Trinket——Why—I wish her joy—that's all. —Mr. Russet, I wish you joy of your son-in-law—Mr. Oakly, I wish you joy of the lady—and you, madam, [*To* HARRIET.] of the gentleman——And, in short, I wish you all joy of one another, 'pon honour. [*Exit.*

Rus. There's a fine fellow of a lord, now!

Maj. Hey! what now? [*Bell rings violently.*

Enter OAKLY.

Oak. D'ye hear, Major, d'ye hear?

Maj. Zounds! what a clatter!——She'll pull down all the bells in the house.

Oak. My observations, since I left you, have confirmed my resolution. I see plainly, that her good humour, and her ill humour, her smiles, her tears, and her fits, are all calculated to play upon me.

Maj. Did not I always tell you so? It's the way with them all——they will be rough and smooth, and hot and cold, and all in a breath. Any thing to get the better of us.

Oak. She is in all moods at present, I promise you—I am at once angry and ashamed of her; and yet she is so ridiculous, I can't help laughing at her. There has she been in her chamber, fuming and fretting, and dispatching a messenger to me every two minutes—servant after servant—now she insists on my coming to her—now again she writes a note to intreat—then Toilet is sent to let me know that she is ill, absolutely dying—then, the very next minute, she'll never see my face again—she'll go out of the house directly. [*Bell rings.*] Again! now the storm rises!—

Maj. It will soon drive this way then—now, brother, prove yourself a man—You have gone too far to retreat.

Oak. Retreat!—Retreat!—No, no!—I'll preserve the advantage I have gained, I am determined.

Maj. Ay, ay!—keep your ground!—fear nothing—up with your noble heart! Good discipline makes good soldiers; stick close to my advice, and you may stand buff to a tigress——

Oak. Here she is, by heavens!—now, brother!

Maj. And now, brother!—now or never!

Enter MRS. OAKLY.

Mrs. Oak. I think, Mr. Oakly, you might have had humanity enough to have come to see how I

did. You have taken your leave, I suppose, of all tenderness and affection—but I'll be calm—I'll not throw myself into a passion—you want to drive me out of your house——I see what you aim at, and will be aforehand with you—let me keep my temper! I'll send for a chair, and leave the house this instant.

Oak. True, my love: I knew you would not think of dining in your own chamber alone, when I had company below. You shall sit at the head of the table, as you ought, to be sure, as you say, and make my friends welcome.

Mrs. Oak. Excellent raillery! Lookye, Mr. Oakly, I see the meaning of all this affected coolness and indifference.

Oak. My dear, consider where you are——

Mrs. Oak. You would be glad, I find, to get me out of your house, and have all your flirts about you.

Oak. Before all this company! Fie!

Mrs. Oak. But I'll disappoint you, for I shall remain in it, to support my due authority—as for you, Major Oakly——

Maj. Hey-day! What have I done?

Mrs. Oak. I think you might find better employment, than to create divisions between married people——and you, sir——

Oak. Nay, but my dear!——

Mrs. Oak. Might have more sense, as well as tenderness, than to give ear to such idle stuff.

Oak. Lord, lord!

Mrs. Oak. You and your wise counsellor there, I suppose, think to carry all your points with me.—

Oak. Was ever any thing——

Mrs. Oak. But it won't do, sir. You shall find that I will have my own way, and that I will govern my own family.

Oak. You had better learn to govern yourself, by half. Your passion makes you ridiculous. Did ever

any body see so much fury and violence; affronting your best friends, breaking my peace, and disconcerting your own temper. And all for what? For nothing. 'Sdeath, madam! at these years you ought to know better.

Mrs. Oak. At these years!—Very fine!——Am I to be talked to in this manner?

Oak. Talked to!—Why not?——You have talked to me long enough—almost talked me to death—and I have taken it all, in hopes of making you quiet—but all in vain. Patience, I find, is all thrown away upon you; and henceforward, come what may, I am resolved to be master of my own house.

Mrs. Oak. So, so!—Master, indeed!——Yes, sir; and you'll take care to have mistresses enough too, I warrant you.

Oak. Perhaps I may; but they shall be quiet ones, I can assure you.

Mrs. Oak. Indeed!—And do you think I am such a tame fool, as to sit quietly and bear all this? You shall know, sir, that I will resent this behaviour——You shall find that I have a spirit——

Oak. Of the devil.

Mrs. Oak. Intolerable!—You shall find, then, that I will exert that spirit. I am sure I have need of it. As soon as the house is once cleared again, I'll shut my doors against all company.—You shan't see a single soul for this month.

Oak. 'Sdeath, madam, but I will!—I'll keep open house for a year.—I'll send cards to the whole town—Mr. Oakly's rout!——All the world will come—and I'll go among the world too—I'll be mewed up no longer.

Mrs. Oak. Provoking insolence! This is not to be endured.——Lookye, Mr. Oakly——

Oak. And lookye, Mrs. Oakly, I will have my own way.

Mrs. Oak. Nay, then, let me tell you, sir——

Oak. And let me tell you, madam, I will not be crossed——I won't be made a fool.

Mrs. Oak. Why, you won't let me speak.

Oak. Because you don't speak as you ought. Madam, madam! you shan't look, nor walk, nor talk, nor think, but as I please.

Mrs. Oak. Was there ever such a monster! I can bear this no longer. [*Bursts into tears.*] O, you vile man! I can see through your design—you cruel, barbarous, inhuman——such usage to your poor wife!——you'll be the death of her.

Oak. She shan't be the death of me, I am determined.

Mrs. Oak. That it should ever come to this!—— To be contradicted—[*Sobbing.*]—insulted—abused —hated——'tis too much—my heart will burst with —oh—oh!——

[*Falls into a Fit.* HARRIET, CHARLES, *&c. run to her assistance.*

Oak. [*Interposing.*] Let her alone.

Har. Sir, Mrs. Oakly——

Charles. For Heaven's sake, sir, she will be——

Oak. Let her alone—I say, I won't have her touch'd—let her alone—if her passions throw her into fits, let the strength of them carry her through them.

Har. Pray, my dear sir, let us assist her. She may—

Oak. I don't care——You shan't touch her—let her bear them patiently—She'll learn to behave better another time—Let her alone, I say.

Mrs. Oak. [*Rising.*] O you monster!—you villain!—you base man!——Would you let me die for want of help?—would you——

Oak. Bless me! madam, your fit is very violent—take care of yourself.

Mrs. Oak. Despised, ridiculed—but I'll be revenged—you shall see, sir——

Oak. *Toll-de-rol lol-de-rol loll-de-roll loll.* [Singing.

Mrs. Oak. What, am I made a jest of? Exposed to all the world?—If there's law or justice—

Oak. *Toll-de-rol loll-de-rol loll-de-rol loll.* [Singing.

Mrs. Oak. I shall burst with anger.—Have a care, sir; you may repent this. Scorned and made ridiculous!—No power on earth shall hinder my revenge! [*Going.*

Har. [*Interposing.*] Stay, madam.

Mrs. Oak. Let me go. I cannot bear this place.

Maj. Courage, brother! you have done wonders. [*Apart.*

Oak. I think, she'll have no more fits. [*Apart.*

Har. Stay, madam—Pray stay but one moment. I have been a painful witness of your uneasiness, and in great part the innocent occasion of it. Give me leave, then——

Mrs. Oak. I did not expect, indeed, to have found you here again. But however——

Har. I see the agitation of your mind, and it makes me miserable. Suffer me to tell you the real truth. I can explain every thing to your satisfaction.

Mrs. Oak. May be so—I cannot argue with you.

Charles. Pray, madam, hear her——for my sake ——for your own—dear madam!

Mrs. Oak. Well—well—proceed.

Oak. I shall relapse, I can't bear to see her so uneasy.

Maj. Hush! hush! [*Apart.*

Har. I understand, madam, that your first alarm was occasioned by a letter from my father to your nephew.

Rus. I was in a bloody passion, to be sure, madam!——The letter was not over civil, I believe—I did not know but the young rogue had ruined my girl. But it's all over now, and so—

Mrs. Oak. You was here yesterday, sir?

Rus. Yes; I came after Harriet. I thought I

should find my young madam with my young sir, here.

Mrs. Oak. With Charles, did you say, sir?

Rus. Ay, with Charles, madam! The young rogue has been fond of her a long time, and she of him, it seems.

Mrs. Oak. I fear I have been to blame. [*Aside.*

Rus. I ask pardon, madam, for the disturbance I made in your house.

Har. And the abrupt manner in which I came into it, demands a thousand apologies. But the occasion must be my excuse.

Mrs. Oak. How have I been mistaken! [*Aside.*] —But did not I overhear you and Mr. Oakly——

[*To* HARRIET.

Har. Dear madam! you had but a partial hearing of our conversation. It related entirely to this gentleman.

Charles. To put it beyond doubt, madam, Mr. Russet and my guardian have consented to our marriage; and we are in hopes that you will not withhold your approbation.

Mrs. Oak. I have no further doubt——I see you are innocent, and it was cruel to suspect you——You have taken a load of anguish off my mind—and yet your kind interposition comes too late; Mr. Oakly's love for me is entirely destroyed. [*Weeping.*

Oak. I must go to her—— [*Apart.*

Maj. Not yet!——Not yet! [*Apart.*

Har. Do not disturb yourself with such apprehensions; I am sure Mr. Oakly loves you most affectionately.

Oak. I can hold no longer. [*Going to her.*] My affection for you, madam, is as warm as ever. Nothing can ever extinguish it. My constrained behaviour has cut me to the soul—For it was all constrained—and it was with the utmost difficulty that I was able to support it.

Mrs. Oak. O, Mr. Oakly, how have I exposed myself! What low arts has my jealousy induced me to practise! I see my folly, and fear that you can never forgive me.

Oak. Forgive you!——This change transports me! ——Brother! Mr. Russet! Charles! Harriet! give me joy!——I am the happiest man in the world.

Maj. Joy, much joy to you both! though, by the by, you are not a little obliged to me for it. Did not I tell you I would cure all the disorders in your family? I beg pardon, sister, for taking the liberty to prescribe for you. My medicines have been somewhat rough, I believe, but they have had an admirable effect, and so don't be angry with your physician.

Mrs. Oak. I am indeed obliged to you, and I feel—

Oak. Nay, my dear, no more of this. All that's past must be utterly forgotten.

Mrs. Oak. I have not merited this kindness, but it shall hereafter be my study to deserve it. Away with all idle jealousies! And since my suspicions have hitherto been groundless, I am resolved for the future never to suspect at all.

THE END.

T. DAVISON, Lombard-street, Whitefriars, London.

OF THE
BOMBAY
BRANCH
OF THE
ASIATIC SOCIETY

DOUGLAS

DOUGLAS — DO NOT DESPAIR! I FEEL A LITTLE STRENGTH
I HOPE IT WILL NOT LAST

ACT V. SCENE V.

PUBLISHED BY G. ROBINSON &

DOUGLAS;

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

BY MR. HOME.

AS PERFORMED AT THE

THEATRE ROYAL, COVENT-GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS. INCHBALD.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN

PATERNOSTER-ROW.

REMARKS.

DOUGLAS is written by Home, the only living author of a living tragedy.

This is the play, which Garrick refused for its simplicity of fable, incident, and poetry. Choice simplicity! on which has been founded its best claim to longevity.

To what particular cause can this dramatic false judgment of our great Roscius be attributed? Not, assuredly, to his want of taste to admire the work,—but to his want of reverence for the taste of the public. He conjectured, that, because his audience loved the common pomp of common tragedies, they would reluctantly yield the splendid scene of courts, or the camp of military tyrants, with high-sounding words and verse, in exchange for domestic interest, plain sense, and true poetical composition. He did not consider, that, deceived or depraved as public opinion too frequently is, there is yet a certain magic in all that is near perfection, by which even ignorance and prejudice are charmed. Such was the event, when Douglas was first brought upon a London stage, after having passed its ordeal at the theatre of Edinburgh; not far distant from those very domains which the

poet has signalized—Balarmo and the Grampian Hills. The passions of grief, joy, fear, and bitter woe, which this tragedy pourtrayed, found instant access to every heart, from the aged to the youthful, either by the avenue of parental or of filial love.

Although Douglas be one of those plays worthy of a reader's, as well as of a spectator's literary hours, yet, perhaps, few classical plays have been more indebted for admirers to the art of acting. Lady Randolph has been distinguished by most eminent representatives. Mrs. Crawford (the once famed Mrs. Bary) displayed, in this part, dramatic powers, which, at times, electrified her audience. Of this effect was her simple interrogation, consisting of three words,—"Was he alive?"*

But to Mrs. Siddons it is given to unite the same bursts of pathetic tenderness, so wonderful in her predecessor, to that matronal beauty of person, and dignity of action, wherein it was denied Mrs. Crawford, to paint this exquisite drawing, by Home, in faithful colours.

To the reader, who is not in the habit of attending theatres, and of estimating the effects of theatric genius, it may not be unnecessary to say,—that the short and seemingly inferior part of Glenalvon may be rendered a conspicuous character upon the stage by the actor's skill, though Cooke, in Glenalvon, is the

* See page 25.

sole evidence that can be adduced to substantiate this fact.

The fairies, who preside over the Nerval of young Betty, protect him from rational criticism, till time shall have chased away all tiny agency, and have left him to engage on equal ground with his giant competitors.

This tragedy of Douglas, extolled by Gray as a work, that had "retrieved the true language of the stage, lost for three hundred years,"—this play, written with the minutest attention to morality in fable, incident, and dialogue, drew upon its meritorious author (who was a minister of the church of Scotland) anathemas from the elders of the Kirk, and bitterest persecution from all the laity of that christian sect.

It may be supposed that the church of Scotland would have been less severe on a less moral production; but, for a dramatist to encroach on their exclusive prerogative of teaching virtue, was not to be forgiven.

Stripped of his benefices, and wholly repudiated for this enormous presumption, Home took shelter in England. His present Majesty, then Prince of Waies—and not less compassionate for being strictly religious,—moved by the author's misfortunes, and impressed by his genius, bestowed on him a pension, which to this day he enjoys.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DOUGLAS	*Master Betty.*
LORD RANDOLPH	*Mr. Murray.*
GLENALVON	*Mr. Cooke.*
NORVAL	*Mr. Hargrave.*
STRANGER	*Mr. Truman.*
LADY RANDOLPH	*Mrs. Litchfield.*
ANNA	*Mrs. Humphries.*

SERVANTS, &c.

SCENE—Scotland.

DOUGLAS

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

The court of a castle, surrounded with woods.

Enter LADY RANDOLPH.

Lady R. Ye woods and wilds, whose melancholy gloom
Accords with my soul's sadness, and draws forth
The voice of sorrow from my bursting heart,
Farewell a while: I will not leave you long;
For in your shades I deem some spirit dwells,
Who, from the chiding stream, or groaning oak,
Still hears and answers to Matilda's moan.
Oh, Douglas! Douglas! if departed ghosts
Are e'er permitted to review this world,
Within the circle of that wood thou art,
And with the passion of immortals hear'st
My lamentation; hear'st thy wretched wife
Weep for her husband slain, her infant lost.
My brother's timeless death I seem to mourn,
Who perished with thee on this fatal day.
Oh, disregard me not; though I am call'd
Another's now, my heart is wholly thine;

Incapable of change, affection lies
Buried, my Douglas, in thy bloody grave.
But Randolph comes, whom fate has made my lord,
To chide my anguish, and defraud the dead.

Enter LORD RANDOLPH.

Lord R. Again these weeds of woe! say, dost thou well,
To feed a passion, which consumes thy life?
The living claim some duty; vainly thou
Bestow'st thy cares upon the silent dead.

Lady R. Silent, alas! is he, for whom I mourn:
Childless, without memorial of his name,
He only now in my remembrance lives.

Lord R. Time, that wears out the trace of deepest anguish,
Has pass'd o'er thee in vain.
Sure thou art not the daughter of Sir Malcolm:
Strong was his rage, eternal his resentment:
For, when thy brother fell, he smiled to hear,
That Douglas' son in the same field was slain.

Lady R. Oh! rake not up the ashes of my fathers:
Implacable resentment was their crime,
And grievous has the expiation been.

Lord R. Thy griefs wrests to its purposes my words.
I never ask'd of thee that ardent love,
Which in the breasts of fancy's children burns.
Decent affection, and complacent kindness,
Were all I wish'd for: but I wish'd in vain.
Hence with the less regret my eyes behold
The storm of war that gathers o'er this land:
If I should perish by the Danish sword,
Matilda would not shed one tear the more.

Lady R. Thou dost not think so: woeful as I am,
I love thy merit, and esteem thy virtues
But whither go'st thou now?

Lord R. Straight to the camp,

Where every warrior on tip-toe stands
Of expectation, and impatient asks
Each who arrives, if he is come to tell
The Danes are landed,
Lady R. Oh, may adverse winds
Far from the coast of Scotland drive their fleet!
And every soldier of both hosts return
In peace and safety to his pleasant home!
Lord R. Thou speak'st a woman's, hear a warrior's wish;
Right from their native land, the stormy north,
May the wind blow, till every keel is fix'd
Immoveable in Caledonia's strand!
Then shall our foes repent their bold invasion,
And roving armies shun the fatal shore.
Lady, farewell: I leave thee not alone;
Yonder comes one, whose love makes duty light.
[*Exit.*

Enter ANNA.

Anna. Forgive the rashness of your Anna's love:
Urged by affection, I have thus presumed
To interrupt your solitary thoughts;
And warn you of the hours that you neglect,
And lose in sadness.
Lady R. So to lose my hours
Is all the use I wish to make of time.
Anna. To blame thee, lady, suits not with my state:
But sure I am, since death first prey'd on man,
Never did sister thus a brother mourn.
What had your sorrows been, if you had lost,
In early youth, the husband of your heart?
Lady R. Oh!
Anna. Have I distress'd you with officious love,
And ill-timed mention of your brother's fate?
Forgive me, lady: humble though I am,
The mind I bear partakes not of my fortune:

So fervently I love you, that to dry
These piteous tears, I'd throw my life away.
Lady R. What power directed thy unconscious tongue
To speak as thou hast done? to name——
Anna. I know not:
But since my words have made my mistress tremble,
I will speak no more; but silent mix
My tears with hers.
Lady R. No, thou shalt not be silent.
I'll trust thy faithful love, and thou shalt be
Henceforth th' instructed partner of my woes.
But what avails it? Can thy feeble pity
Roll back the flood of never-ebbing time?
Compel the earth and ocean to give up
Their dead alive?
Anna. What means my noble mistress?
Lady R. Didst thou not ask what had my sorrows been,
If I, in early youth, had lost a husband?—
In the cold bosom of the earth is lodged,
Mangled with wounds, the husband of my youth;
And in some cavern of the ocean lies
My child and his!
Anna. Oh! lady most revered!
The tale, wrapt up in your amazing words,
Deign to unfold.
Lady R. Alas! an ancient feud,
Hereditary evil, was the source
Of my misfortunes. Ruling fate decreed,
That my brave brother should in battle save
The life of Douglas' son, our house's foe;
The youthful warriors vow'd eternal friendship
To see the vaunted sister of his friend,
Impatient, Douglas to Balarmo came,
Under a borrow'd name—My heart he gain'd;
Nor did I long refuse the hand he begg'd:
My brother's presence authorized our marriage

Three weeks, three little weeks, with wings of down,
Had o'er us flown, when my loved lord was call'd
To fight his father's battles; and with him,
In spite of all my tears, did Malcolm go.
Scarce were they gone, when my stern sire was told,
That the false stranger was Lord Douglas' son.
Frantic with rage, the baron drew his sword,
And question'd me. Alone, forsaken, faint,
Kneeling beneath his sword, fault'ring I took
An oath equivocal, that I ne'er would
Wed one of Douglas' name. Sincerity!
Thou first of virtues, let no mortal leave
Thy onward path! although the earth should gape,
And from the gulph of hell destruction cry
To take dissimulation's winding way.

Anna. Alas! how few of woman's fearful kind
Durst own a truth so hardy!

Lady R. The first truth
Is easiest to avow. This moral learn,
This precious moral, from my tragic tale.—
In a few days the dreadful tidings came,
That Douglas and my brother both were slain.
My lord! my life! my husband!—mighty heaven
What had I done to merit such affliction?

Anna. My dearest lady! many a tale of tears
I've listen'd to; but never did I hear
A tale so sad as this.

Lady R. In the first days
Of my distracting grief, I found myself——
As women wish to be, who love their lords.
But who durst tell my father? The good priest,
Who join'd our hands, my brother's ancient tutor,
With his loved Malcolm in the battle fell:
They two alone were privy to the marriage.
On silence and concealment I resolved,
Till time should make my father's fortune mine.
That very night on which my son was born,
My nurse, the only confidant I had,

Set out with me to reach her sister's house:
But nurse, nor infant, have I ever seen,
Or heard of, Anna, since that fatal hour.

Anna. Not seen, or heard of! then perhaps he lives.

Lady R. No. It was dark December; wind and rain
Had beat all night. Across the Carron lay
The destin'd road; and in its swelling flood
My faithful servant perish'd with my child.
Oh! had I died, when my loved husband fell!
Had some good angel open'd to me the book
Of Providence, and let me read my life,
My heart had broke, when I beheld the sum
Of ills which, one by one, I have endured!

Anna. That power, whose ministers good angels are
Hath shut the book, in mercy to mankind.
But we must leave this theme; Glenalvon comes:
I saw him bend on you his thoughtful eyes,
And hitherwards he slowly stalks his way.

Lady R. I will avoid him. An ungracious person
Is doubly irksome in an hour like this.

Anna. Why speaks my lady thus of Randolph's heir?

Lady R. Because he's not the heir of Randolph's virtues.
Subtle and shrewd, he offers to mankind
An artificial image of himself;
And he with ease can vary to the taste
Of different men, its features;
Yet is he brave and politic in war?
And stands aloft in these unruly times.
Why I describe him thus I'll tell hereafter;
Stay, and detain him till I reach the castle.

[*Exit* LADY RANDOLPH.

Anna. Oh, happiness! where art thou to be found!
I see thou dwellest not with birth and beauty,
Tho' graced with grandeur, and in wealth array'd:

Nor dost thou, it would seem, with virtue dwell,
Else had this gentle lady miss'd thee not.

Enter GLENALVON.

Glen. What dost thou muse on, meditating maid?
Like some entranced and visionary seer,
On earth, thou stand'st, thy thoughts ascend to Heaven.

Anna. Would that I were, e'en as thou say'st, a seer,
To have my doubts by heavenly vision clear'd!

Glen. What dost thou doubt of! What hast thou to do
With subjects intricate? Thy youth, thy beauty,
Cannot be questioned: think of these good gifts;
And then thy contemplations will be pleasing.

Anna. Let women view yon monument of woe,
Then boast of beauty: who so fair as she?
But I must follow; this revolving day
Awakes the memory of her ancient woes.

[*Exit* ANNA.

Glen. [*Solus.*] So!—Lady Randolph shuns me; by and by
I'll woo her as the lion wooes his bride.
The deed's a-doing now, that makes me lord
Of these rich valleys, and a chief of power.
The season is most apt; my sounding steps
Will not be heard amidst the din of arms.
Randolph has lived too long: his better fate
Had the ascendant once, and kept me down:
When I had seiz'd the dame, by chance he came,
Rescued, and had the lady for his labour:
I 'scap'd unknown! a slender consolation!
Heav'n is my witness that I do not love
To sow in peril, and let others reap
The jocund harvest. Yet I am not safe:
By love, or something like it, stung, inflamed,

Madly I blabb'd my passion to his wife,
And she has threaten'd to acquaint him of it.
The way of woman's will I do not know:
But well I know the Baron's wrath is deadly.
I will not live in fear; the man I dread
Is as a Dane to me: ay, and the man
Who stands betwixt me and my chief desire.
No bar but he; she has no kinsman near;
No brother in his sister's quarrel bold;
And for the righteous cause, a stranger's cause,
I know no chief that will defy Glenalvon. [*Exit.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

A Court; &c.

Enter SERVANTS *and a* STRANGER *at one door, and* LADY RANDOLPH *and* ANNA *at another.*

Lady R. What means this clamour? Stranger, speak secure;
Hast thou been wrong'd? Have these rude men presumed
To vex the weary traveller on his way?
1*st Serv.* By us no stranger ever suffer'd wrong:
This man, with outcry wild, has call'd us forth;
So sore afraid he cannot speak his fears.

Enter attendants, LORD RANDOLPH, *and a* YOUNG MAN, *with their swords drawn, and bloody.*

Lady R. Not vain the stranger's fears! How fares my lord?

Lord R. That it fares well, thanks to this gallant youth,
Whose valour saved me from a wretched death!
As down the winding dale I walk'd alone,
At the crossway, four arm'd men attack'd me:
Rovers, I judge, from the licentious camp;
Who would have quickly laid Lord Randolph low,
Had not this brave and gen'rous stranger come
Like my good angel in the hour of fate,
And, mocking danger, made my foes his own.
They turn'd upon him; but his active arm
Struck to the ground, from whence they rose no more,
The fiercest two: the others fled amain,
And left him master of the bloody field.
Speak, Lady Randolph; upon beauty's tongue
Dwell accents pleasing to the brave and bold.
Speak, noble dame, and thank him for thy lord.

Lady R. My lord, I cannot speak what now I feel.
My heart o'erflows with gratitude to Heav'n,
And to this noble youth,
Have you not learn'd of him whom we should thank?
Whom call the saviour of Lord Randolph's life?

Lord R. I ask'd that question, and he answer'd not;
But I must know who my deliverer is.
[*To the* STRANGER.

Strang. A low-born man, of parentage obscure,
Who nought can boast but his desire to be
A soldier, and to gain a name in arms.

Lord R. Whoe'er thou art, thy spirit is ennobled
By the great King of kings! thou art ordain'd
And stampt a hero by the sovereign hand
Of nature! blush not, flower of modesty
As well as valour, to declare thy birth.

Strang. My name is Norval? on the Grampian hills
My father feeds his flocks: a frugal swain,
Whose constant cares were to increase his store,
And keep his only son, myself, at home.
For I had heard of battles, and I long'd
To follow to the field some warlike lord:
And Heav'n soon granted what my sire denied.
This moon, which rose last night, round as my shield,
Had not yet fill'd her horns, when, by her light,
A band of fierce barbarians, from the hills,
Rush'd like a torrent down upon the vale,
Sweeping our flocks and herds. The shepherds fled
For safety and for succour. I alone,
With bended bow, and quiver full of arrows,
Hover'd about the enemy, and mark'd
The road he took; then hasted to my friends,
Whom, with a troop of fifty chosen men,
I met advancing. The pursuit I led,
Till we o'ertook the spoil-encumber'd foe.
We fought and conquer'd. Ere a sword was drawn,
An arrow from my bow had pierced their chief,
Who wore that day the arms which now I wear.
Returning home in triumph, I disdain'd
The shepherd's slothful life; and having heard
That our good king had summon'd his bold peers
To lead their warriors to the Carron side,
I left my father's house, and took with me
A chosen servant to conduct my steps:
Yon trembling coward, who forsook his master.
Journeying with this intent, I pass'd these towers,
And, heaven-directed, came this day to do
The happy deed, that gilds my humble name.

Lord R. He is as wise as brave. Was ever tale
With such a gallant modesty rehearsed?—
My brave deliverer! thou shalt enter now
A nobler list, and, in a monarch's sight,
Contend with princes for the prize of fame.

I will present thee to our Scottish king,
Whose valiant spirit ever valour loved.—
Ha! my Matilda! wherefore starts that fear?
Lady R. I cannot say: for various affections,
And strangely mingled, in my bosom swell;
I joy, that thou art safe; and I admire
Him and his fortunes, who hath wrought thy safety.
Obscure and friendless, he the army sought,
Bent upon peril, in the range of death
Resolved to hunt for fame, and with his sword
To gain distinction which his birth denied.
In this attempt, unknown he might have perish'd,
And gain'd, with all his valour, but oblivion.
Now graced by thee, his virtues serve no more
Beneath despair. The soldier now of hope
He stands conspicuous;
On this my mind reflected, whilst you spoke,
And bless'd the wonder-working hand of Heaven.
Lord R. Pious and grateful ever are thy thoughts!
My deeds shall follow where thou point'st the way.
Next to myself, and equal to Glenalvon,
In honour and command shall Norval be.
Nor. I know not how to thank you. Rude I am
In speech and manners: never, till this hour,
Stood I in such a presence: yet, my lord,
There's something in my breast, which makes me bold
To say, that Norval ne'er will shame thy favour.
Lady R. I will be sworn thou wilt not. Thou shalt be
My knight: and ever, as thou didst to-day,
With happy valour guard the life of Randolph.
Lord R. Well hast thou spoke. Let me forbid reply, [*To* NORVAL.
We are thy debtors still; thy high desert
O'ertops our gratitude. I must proceed,
As was at first intended, to the camp.
Some of my train, I see, are speeding hither,

Impatient, doubtless, of their lord's delay.
Go with me, Norval, and thine eyes shall see
The chosen warriors of thy native land,
Who languish for the fight, and beat the air
With brandish'd swords.

Nor. Let us begone, my lord.

Lord R. [*To* LADY RANDOLPH.] About the time,
that the declining sun
Shall his broad orbit o'er yon hills suspend,
Expect us to return. This night once more
Within these walls I rest; my tent I pitch
To-morrow in the field. Prepare the feast.
Free is his heart, who for his country fights:
He, in the eve of battle may resign
Himself to social pleasure; sweetest then,
When danger to a soldier's soul endears
The human joy that never may return.

[*Exeunt* RANDOLPH *and* NORVAL.

Lady R. Wretch that I am! Alas! why am I so?
At every happy parent I repine!
How blest the mother of yon gallant Norval!
She, for a living husband, bore her pains,
And heard him bless her when a man was born:
She nursed her smiling infant on her breast,
Tended the child, and rear'd the pleasing boy;
She, with affection's triumph, saw the youth
In grace and comeliness surpass his peers:
Whilst I to a dead husband bore a son,
And to the roaring waters gave my child.

Anna. Alas! alas! why will you thus resume
Your grief afresh? I thought that gallant youth
Would, for awhile, have won you from your woe.
On him intent you gazed, with a look
Much more delighted than your pensive eye
Has deign'd on other objects to bestow.

Lady R. Delighted, say'st thou? Oh! even there
mine eye
Found fuel for my life-consuming sorrow;

I thought that, had the son of Douglas lived,
He might have been like this young gallant stranger.
While thus I mused, a spark from fancy fell
On my sad heart, and kindled up a fondness
For this young stranger, wand'ring from his home,
And like an orphan cast upon my care.
I will protect thee (said I to myself,)
With all my power, and grace with all my favour.

Anna. Sure Heaven will bless so generous a resolve.
You must, my noble dame, exert your power;
You must awake: devices will be framed,
And arrows pointed at the breast of Norval.

Lady R. Glenalvon's false and crafty head will work
Against a rival in his kinsman's love,
If I deter him not: I only can.
Bold as he is, Glenalvon will beware
How he pulls down the fabric that I raise.
I'll be the artist of young Norval's fortune.

Enter GLENALVON.

Glen. Where is my dearest kinsman, noble Randolph?

Lady R. Have you not heard, Glenalvon, of the base——

Glen. I have; and that the villains may not 'scape,
With a strong band I have begirt the wood.
If they lurk there, alive they shall be taken,
And torture force from them th' important secret,
Whether some foe of Randolph hired their swords,
Or if——

Lady R. That care becomes a kinsman's love.
I have a counsel for Glenalvon's ear. [*Exit* ANNA.

Glen. To him your counsels always are commands.

Lady R. I have not found so; thou art known to me.

Glen. Known!

Lady R. And most certain is my cause of knowledge.

Glen. What do you know? by Heaven,
You much amaze me! No created thing,
Yourself except, durst thus accost me.
Lady R. Is guilt so bold? and dost thou make a merit
Of thy pretended meekness? Thus to me,
Who, with a gentleness which duty blames,
Have hitherto conceal'd what, if divulged,
Would make thee nothing; or, what's worse than that,
An outcast beggar, and unpitied too:
For mortals shudder at a crime like thine.
Glen. Thy virtue awes me. First of womankind!
Permit me yet to say, that the fond man,
Whom love transports beyond strict virtue's bounds,
If he is brought by love to misery,
In fortune ruin'd, as in mind forlorn,
Unpitied cannot be. Pity's the alms,
Which, on such beggars, freely is bestowed;
For mortals know, that love is still their lord,
And o'er their vain resolves advances still;
As fire, when kindled by our shepherds, moves
Through the dry heath before the fanning wind.
Lady R. Reserve these accents for some other ear.
To love's apology I listen not.
Mark thou my words; for it is meet thou shouldst.
His brave deliverer Randolph here retains.
Perhaps his presence may not please thee well:
But, at thy peril, practise aught against him:
Let not thy jealousy attempt to shake
And loosen the good root he has in Randolph;
Whose favourites I know thou hast supplanted.
Thou look'st at me, as if thou fain wouldst pry
Into my heart. 'Tis open as my speech.
I give this early caution, and put on
The curb, before thy temper breaks away.
The friendless stranger my protection claims:
His friend I am, and be not thou his foe. [*Exit*

Glen. Child that I was, to start at my own shadow,
And be the shallow fool of coward conscience!
I am not what I have been; what I should be.
The darts of destiny have almost pierced
My marble heart. Had I one grain of faith
In holy legends, and religious tales,
I should conclude, there was an arm above
That fought against me, and malignant turn'd,
To catch myself, the subtle snare I set.
Why, rape and murder are not simple means!
Th' imperfect rape to Randolph gave a spouse;
And the intended murder introduced
A favourite to hide the sun from me;
And, worst of all, a rival. Burning hell!
This were thy centre, if I thought she loved him!
'Tis certain she contemns me; nay, commands me,
And waves the flag of her displeasure o'er me,
In his behalf. And shall I thus be braved?
Curb'd, as she calls it, by dame Chastity?
Infernal fiends, if any fiends there are
More fierce than love, ambition, and revenge,
Rise up, and fill my bosom with your fires!
Darkly a project peers upon my mind,
Like the red moon when rising in the east,
Cross'd and divided by strange-coloured clouds.
I'll seek the slave who came with Norval hither,
And for his cowardice was spurned from him.
I've known such follower's rankled bosom breed
Venom most fatal to his heedless lord. [*Exeunt*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

A Court, &c. as before.

Enter ANNA.

Anna. Thy vassals, grief, great nature's order break
And change the noontide to the midnight hour.
Whilst Lady Randolph rests I will walk forth,
And taste the air that breathes on yonder banks.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. One of the vile assassins is secured,
That struck this morning at Lord Randolph's life.
We found the villain lurking in the wood;
With dreadful imprecations he denies
All knowledge of the crime. But this is not
His first essay: these jewels were conceal'd
In the most secret places of his garment;
Belike the spoils of some, that he has murder'd.
Anna. Let me look on them. Ha! here is a heart
The chosen crest of Douglas' valiant name!
These are no vulgar jewels. Guard the wretch.
[*Exit* ANNA

Enter SERVANTS *with a* PRISONER.

Pris. I know no more than does the child unborn
Of what you charge me with.
1*st Serv.* You say, so, sir!
But torture soon shall make you speak the truth.
Behold, the lady of Lord Randolph comes;
Prepare yourself to meet her just revenge.

Enter LADY RANDOLPH *and* ANNA.

Anna. Summon your utmost fortitude before
You speak with him.
Your dignity, your fame,
Are now at stake. Think of the fatal secret,
Which in a moment from your lips may fly.

Lady R. Thou shalt behold me, with a desperate heart,
Hear how my infant perish'd. See, he kneels.
[*The* PRISONER *kneels.*

Pris. Heav'n bless that countenance, so sweet and mild!
A judge like thee makes innocence more bold. [*Rises.*]
Oh, save me, lady! from these cruel men,
Who have attack'd and seized me; who accuse
Me of intended murder. As I hope
For mercy at the judgment seat of Heaven,
The tender lamb, that never nipt the grass
Is not more innocent than I of murder.

Lady R. Of this man's guilt what proof can ye produce?

1*st. Serv.* We found him lurking in the hollow glen.
When view'd and call'd upon, amazed he fled;
We overtook him, and inquired from whence
And what he was: he said he came from far,
And was upon his journey to the camp.
Not satisfied with this, we search'd his clothes,
And found these jewels; whose rich value plead
Most powerfully against him. Hard he seems,
And old in villainy. Permit us to try
His stubbornness against the torture's force.

Pris. Oh, gentle lady! by your lord's dear life,
Which these weak hands, I swear, did ne'er assail,
And by your children's welfare, spare my age!
Let not the iron tear my ancient joints,
And my grey hairs bring to the grave with pain.

Lady R. Account for these; thine own they cannot be;
For these, I say: be stedfast to the truth;
Detected falsehood is most certain death.
[ANNA *removes the* SERVANTS, *and returns*
Pris. Alas! I'm sore beset! let never man,
For sake of lucre, sin against his soul!
Eternal Justice is in this most just!
I, guiltless now, must former guilt reveal.
Lady R. Oh! Anna, hear!—once more I charge thee, speak
The truth direct; for these to me foretell
And certify a part of thy narration,
With which if the remainder tallies not,
An instant and a dreadful death abides thee.
Pris. Then, thus adjured, I'll speak to you as just
As if you were the minister of Heaven,
Sent down to search the secret sins of men.
Some eighteen years ago, I rented land,
Of brave Sir Malcolm, then Balarmo's lord;
But falling to decay, his servants seized
All that I had, and then turn'd me and mine
(Four helpless infants, and their weeping mother)
Out to the mercy of the winter winds.
A little hovel by the river's side
Received us; there hard labour, and the skill
In fishing, which was formerly my sport,
Supported life. Whilst thus we poorly lived,
One stormy night, as I remember well,
The wind and rain beat hard upon our roof;
Red came the river down, and loud and oft
The angry spirit of the water shriek'd.
At the dead hour of night was heard the cry
Of one in jeopardy. I rose, and ran
To where the circling eddy of a pool,
Beneath the ford, used oft to bring within
My reach whatever floating thing the stream
Had caught. The voice was ceased; the person lost;

But looking sad and earnest on the waters,
By the moon's light I saw, whirl'd round and round,
A basket: soon I drew it to the bank,
And nestled curious there an infant lay.
Lady R. Was he alive?
Pris. He was.
Lady R. Inhuman that thou art!
How could'st thou kill what waves and tempests spared?
Pris. I am not so inhuman.
Lady R. Didst thou not?
Pris. The needy man, who has known better days,
One whom distress has spited at the world,
Is he, whom tempting fiends would pitch upon
To do such deeds as makes the prosperous men
Lift up their hands, and wonder who could do them.
And such a man was I; a man declined,
Who saw no end of black adversity:
Yet, for the wealth of kingdoms, I would not
Have touch'd that infant with a hand of harm.
Lady R. Ha! dost thou say so? then perhaps he lives!
Pris. Not many days ago he was alive.
Lady R. Oh! heavenly powers! did he then die so lately?
Pris. I did not say he died: I hope he lives.
Not many days ago these eyes beheld
Him, flourishing in youth, and health, and beauty.
Lady R. Where is he now?
Pris. Alas! I know not where.
Lady R. Oh! fate! I fear thee still. Thou riddler, speak
Direct and clear, else I will search thy soul.
Pris. Fear not my faith, though I must speak my shame.
Within the cradle where the infant lay,
Was stowed a mighty store of gold and jewels;
Tempted by which, we did resolve to hide,

From all the world, the wonderful event,
And like a peasant breed this noble child.
That none might mark the change of our estate,
We left the country, travell'd to the north,
Bought flocks and herds, and gradually brought forth
Our secret wealth. But heav'n's all-seeing eye
Beheld our avarice, and smote us sore.
For one by one all our own children died,
And he, the stranger, sole remain'd the heir
Of what indeed was his. Fain then would I,
Who with a father's fondness loved the boy,
Have trusted him, now in the dawn of youth
With his own secret: but my anxious wife,
Foreboding evil, never would consent.
Meanwhile the stripling grew in years and beauty;
And, as we oft observed, he bore himself,
Not as the offspring of our cottage blood;
For nature will break out: mild with the mild,
But with the froward he was fierce as fire,
And night and day he talk'd of war and arms.
I set myself against his warlike bent;
But all in vain: for when a desperate band
Of robbers from the savage mountains came——

Lady R. Eternal Providence! what is thy name?

Pris. My name is Norval; and my name he bears

Lady R. 'Tis he! 'tis he himself! It is my son!
Oh! sovereign mercy! 'twas my child I saw!

Pris. If I, amidst astonishment and fear,
Have of your words and gestures rightly judged,
Thou art the daughter of my ancient master;
The child I rescued from the flood is thine!

Lady R. With thee dissimulation now were vain.
I am indeed the daughter of Sir Malcolm;
The child thou rescu'dst from the flood is mine.

Pris. Blest be the hour that made me a poor man!
My poverty hath saved my master's house!

Lady R. Thy words surprise me: sure thou dost not feign!

The tear stands in thine eye: such love from thee
Sir Malcolm's house deserved not, if aright
Thou told'st the story of thy own distress.
Pris. Sir Malcolm of our barons was the flower;
The fastest friend, the best and kindest master.
But, ah! he knew not of my sad estate.
After that battle, where his gallant son,
Your own brave brother, fell, the good old lord
Grew desperate and reckless of the world;
And never, as he erst was wont, went forth
To overlook the conduct of his servants.
By them I was thrust out, and them I blame:
May heaven so judge me as I judge my master!
And God so love me as I love his race!
Lady R. His race shall yet reward thee.
Remember'st thou a little lonely hut,
That like a holy hermitage appears
Among the Cliffs of Carron?
Pris. I remember
The cottage of the cliffs.
Lady R. 'Tis that I mean:
There dwells a man of venerable age,
Who in my father's service spent his youth:
Tell him I sent thee, and with him remain,
Till I shall call upon thee to declare,
Before the king and nobles, what thou now
To me hast told. No more but this, and thou
Shalt live in honour all thy future days;
Thy son so long, shall call thee father still,
And all the land shall bless the man who saved
The son of Douglas, and Sir Malcolm's heir.
Remember well my words; if thou shouldst meet
Him, whom thou call'st thy son, still call him so;
And mention nothing of his nobler father.
Pris. Fear not that I shall mar so fair an harvest,
By putting in my sickle ere 'tis ripe.
Why did I leave my home and ancient dame?
To find the youth, to tell him all I knew,

And make him wear these jewels in his arms,
Which might, I thought, be challenged, and so bring
To light the secret of his noble birth.
[LADY RANDOLPH *goes towards the* SERVANTS.
Lady R. This man is not th' assassin you suspected,
Though chance combined some likelihoods against him.
He is the faithful bearer of the jewels
To their right owner, whom in haste he seeks.
'Tis meet that you should put him on his way,
Since your mistaken zeal hath dragg'd him hither.
[*Exeunt* STRANGER *and* SERVANTS.
My faithful Anna! dost thou share my joy?
I know thou dost. Unparallel'd event!
Reaching from heaven to earth, Jehovah's arm
Snatch'd from the waves, and brings me to my son!
Judge of the widow, and the orphan's father,
Accept a widow's and a mother's thanks
For such a gift!—What does my Anna think
Of the young eaglet of a valiant nest?
How soon he gazed on bright and burning arms,
Spurn'd the low dunghill where his fate had thrown him,
And tow'r'd up to the region of his sire!
Anna. How fondly did your eyes devour the boy!
Mysterious nature, with the unseen cord
Of powerful instinct, drew you to your own.
Lady R. The ready story of his birth believed,
Suppress'd my fancy quite; nor did he owe
To any likeness my so sudden favour:
But now I long to see his face again,
Examine every feature, and find out
The lineaments of Douglas, or my own.
But most of all, I long to let him know
Who his true parents are, to clasp his neck,
And tell him all the story of his father.
Anna. With wary caution you must bear yourself
In public, lest your tenderness break forth,

And in observers stir conjectures strange.
To-day the baron started at your tears.
Lady R. He did so, Anna! well thy mistress knows
If the least circumstance, mote of offence,
Should touch the baron's eye, his sight would be
With jealousy disorder'd.
Anna. That demon haunts you still:
Behold Glenalvon.
Lady R. Now I shun him not.
This day I braved him in behalf of Norval:
Perhaps too far; at least my nicer fears
For Douglas thus interpret. [*Exit* ANNA.

Enter GLENALVON.

Glen. Noble dame!
The hov'ring Dane at last his men hath landed;
No band of pirates; but a mighty host,
That come to settle where their valour conquers;
To win a country, or to lose themselves.
Lady R. How many mothers shall bewail their sons!
How many widows weep their husbands slain!
Ye dames of Denmark, ev'n for you I feel,
Who, sadly sitting on the sea-beat shore,
Long look for lords that never shall return.
Glen. Oft has th' unconquer'd Caledonian sword
Widow'd the north. The children of the slain
Come, as I hope, to meet their fathers' fate.
The monster war, with her infernal brood,
Loud yelling fury, and life-ending pain,
Are objects suited to Glenalvon's soul.
Scorn is more grievous than the pains of death;
Reproach more piercing than the pointed sword.
Lady R. I scorn thee not but when I ought to scorn;
Nor e'er reproach, but when insulted virtue
Against audacious vice asserts herself.
I own thy worth, Glenalvon; none more apt

Than I to praise thy eminence in arms,
And be the echo of thy martial fame.
No longer vainly feed a guilty passion:
Go and pursue a lawful mistress, Glory
Upon the Danish crests redeem thy fault,
And let thy valour be the shield of Randolph.

Glen. One instant stay, and hear an alter'd man.
When beauty pleads for virtue, vice abash'd
Flies its own colours, and goes o'er to virtue.
I am your convert; time will shew how truly:
Yet one immediate proof I mean to give.
That youth for whom your ardent zeal to-day,
Somewhat too haughtily, defy'd your slave,
Amidst the shock of armies I'll defend,
And turn death from him with a guardian arm.

Lady R. Act thus, Glenalvon, and I am thy friend:
But that's thy least reward. Believe me, sir,
The truly generous is the truly wise;
And he, who loves not others, lives unblest.
[*Exit* LADY RANDOLPH.

Glen. [*Solus.*] Amen! and virtue is its own reward!
I think, that I have hit the very tone
In which she loves to speak. Honey'd assent,
How pleasing art thou to the taste of man,
And woman also! flattery direct
Seldom disgusts. They little know mankind,
Who doubt its operation: 'tis my key,
And opes the wicket of the human heart.
How far I have succeeded now, I know not.
Yet I incline to think her stormy virtue
Is lull'd awhile; 'tis her alone I fear:
Whilst she and Randolph live, and live in faith
And amity, uncertain is my tenure.
That slave of Norval's I have found most apt:
I shew'd him gold, and he has pawn'd his soul
To say and swear whatever I suggest.
Norval, I'm told, has that alluring look,

'Twixt man and woman, which I have observed
To charm the nicer and fantastic dames,
Who are, like Lady Randolph, full of virtue.
In raising Randolph's jealousy, I may
But point him to the truth. He seldom errs,
Who thinks the worst he can of womankind. [*Exit.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

A Court.

Flourish of Trumpets.

Enter LORD RANDOLPH, *attended.*

Lord R. Summon an hundred horse by break of day,
To wait our pleasure at the castle gate.
Lady R. Alas! my lord! I've heard unwelcome news:
The Danes are landed.
Lord R. Ay, no inroad this
Of the Northumbrian, bent to take a spoil;
No sportive war, no tournament essay
Of some young knight, resolv'd to break a spear,
And stain with hostile blood his maiden arms.
The Danes are landed: we must beat them back,
Or live the slaves of Denmark.

Lady R. Dreadful times!

Lord R. The fenceless villages are all forsaken;
The trembling mothers, and their children lodged
In well-girt towers and castles: whilst the men
Retire indignant. Yet, like broken waves,
They but retire more awful to return.

Lady R. Immense, as fame reports, the Danish host!

Lord R. Were it as numerous as loud fame reports,
An army knit like ours would pierce it through:
Brothers that shrink not from each other's side,
And fond companions, fill our warlike files:
For his dear offspring, and the wife he loves
The husband, and the fearless father arm.
In vulgar breasts heroic ardour burns,
And the poor peasant mates his daring lord.

Lady R. Men's minds are temper'd, like their swords, for war.
Hence, early graves; hence the lone widow's life;
And the sad mother's grief embitter'd age.
Where is our gallant guest?

Lord R. Down in the vale
I left him managing a fiery steed,
Whose stubbornness had foil'd the strength and skill
Of every rider. But behold he comes,
In earnest conversation with Glenalvon.—

Enter NORVAL *and* GLENALVON.

Glenalvon, with the lark arise: go forth
And lead my troops that lie in yonder vale:
Private I travel to the royal camp:
Norval, thou go'st with me. But say, young man,
Where didst thou learn so to discourse of war,
And in such terms as I o'erheard to-day?
War is no village science, nor its phrase
A language taught among the shepherd swains

Nor. Small is the skill my lord delights to praise
In him he favours. Hear from whence it came.
Beneath a mountain's brow, the most remote,
And inaccessible, by shepherds trod,
In a deep cave, dug by no mortal hand,
A hermit lived; a melancholy man,
Who was the wonder of our wand'ring swains:
Austere and lonely, cruel to himself,
Did they report him; the cold earth his bed,
Water his drink, his food the shepherds' alms.
I went to see him, and my heart was touch'd
With reverence and pity. Mild he spake,
And, entering on discourse, such stories told
As made me oft revisit his sad cell.
For he had been a soldier in his youth;
And fought in famous battles when the peers
Of Europe, by the bold Godfredo led,
Against th' usurping infidel display'd
The blessed cross, and won the Holy Land.
Pleased with my admiration, and the fire
His speech struck from me, the old man would shake
His years away, and act his young encounters;
Then having shew'd his wounds, he sit him down,
And all the live-long day discourse of war.
To help my fancy, in the smooth green turf
He cut the figures of the marshall'd hosts;
Described the motions, and explain'd the use
Of the deep column, and the lengthen'd line,
The square, the crescent, and the phalanx firm.
For all, that Saracen or Christian knew
Of war's vast art, was to this hermit known.

[*Trumpets at a distance*

Lord R. From whence these sounds?

Enter an OFFICER.

Offi. My lord, the trumpets of the troops of Lorn:
Their valiant leader hails the noble Randolph.

Lord R. Mine ancient guest! does he the warrio.
lead?
Has Denmark roused the brave old knight to arms?
Offi. No; worn with warfare, he resigns the sword;
His eldest hope, the valiant John of Lorn,
Now leads his kindred bands.
Lord R. Glenalvon, go.
With hospitality's most strong request
Entreat the chief. [*Exit* GLENALVON.
Offi. My lord, requests are vain.
He urges on, impatient of delay,
Stung with the tidings of the foe's approach.
Lord R. May victory sit on the warrior's plume!
Bravest of men! his flocks and herds are safe;
Remote from war's alarms his pastures lie,
By mountains inaccessible secured;
Yet foremost he into the plain descends,
Eager to bleed in battles not his own.
Such were the heroes of the ancient world;
Contemners they of indolence and gain;
But still for love of glory and of arms,
Prone to encounter peril, and to lift
Against each strong antagonist the spear.
I'll go and press the hero to my breast.
[*Exit with* OFFICER.
Lady R. The soldier's loftiness, the pride and
pomp
Investigating awful war, Norval, I see,
Transport thy youthful mind.
Nor. Ah! should they not?
Bless'd be the hour I left my father's house;
I might have been a shepherd all my days,
And stole obscurely to a peasant's grave;
Now, if I live, with mighty chiefs I stand;
And if I fall, with noble dust I lie.
Lady R. There is a generous spirit in thy breast,
That could have well sustain'd a prouder fortune.
Since lucky chance has left us here alone,

Unseen, unheard, by human eye or ear,
I will amaze thee with a wondrous tale.
Nor. Let there be danger, lady, with the secret,
That I may hug it to my grateful heart;
And prove my faith. Command my sword, my life:
These are the sole possessions of poor Norval.
Lady R. Know'st thou these gems?
Nor. Durst I believe mine eyes
I'd say I knew them, and they were my father's.
Lady R. Thy father's, say'st thou? Ah, they were thy father's!
Nor. I saw them once, and curiously enquired
Of both my parents, whence such splendor came.
But I was check'd, and more could never learn.
Lady R. Then learn of me; thou art not Norval's son.
Nor. Not Norval's son!
Lady R. Nor of a shepherd sprung.
Nor. Lady, who am I then?
Lady R. Noble thou art,
For noble was thy sire.
Nor. I will believe——
Oh, tell me farther! Say, who was my father?
Lady R. Douglas!
Nor. Lord Douglas, whom to-day I saw?
Lady R. His younger brother.
Nor. And in yonder camp?
Lady R. Alas!
Nor. You make me tremble—Sighs and tears!
Lives my brave father?
Lady R. Ah, too brave indeed!
He fell in battle ere thyself was born.
Nor. Ah, me unhappy, ere I saw the light!
But does my mother live? I my conclude,
From my own fate, her portion has been sorrow.
Lady R. She lives: but wastes her life in constant woe,
Weeping her husband slain, her infant lost.

Nor. You, that are skill'd so well in the sad story
Of my unhappy parents, and with tears
Bewail their destiny, now have compassion
Upon the offspring of the friends you loved.
Oh, tell me who and where my mother is!
Oppress'd by a base world, perhaps she bends
Beneath the weight of other ills than grief,
And, desolate, implores of heaven the aid
Her son should give. It is, it must be so——
Your countenance confesses that she is wretched!
Oh, tell me her condition! Can the sword——
Who shall resist me in a parent's cause?

Lady R. Thy virtue ends her woe—My son! my son!

Nor. Art thou my mother?

Lady R. I am thy mother, and the wife of Douglas! [*Falls upon his neck.*

Nor. Oh, heaven and earth! how wondrous is my fate!
Ever let me kneel!

Lady R. Image of Douglas! fruit of fatal love!
All that I owe thy sire I pay to thee.

Nor. Respect and admiration still possess me,
Checking the love and fondness of a son:
Yet I was filial to my humble parents.
But did my sire surpass the rest of men,
As thou excellest all of woman kind?

Lady R. Arise, my son. In me thou dost behold
The poor remains of beauty once admired.
Yet in my prime I equall'd not thy father:
His eyes were like the eagle's, yet sometimes
Liker the dove's: and, as he pleased, he won
All hearts with softness, or with spirit awed.

Nor. How did he fall? Sure 'twas a bloody field
When Douglas died. Oh, I have much to ask!

Lady R. Hereafter thou shalt hear the lengthen'd tale
Of all thy father's and thy mother's woes.

At present this—Thou art the rightful heir
Of yonder castle, and the wide domains,
Which now Lord Randolph, as my husband, holds.
But thou shalt not be wrong'd; I have the power
To right thee still. Before the king I'll kneel,
And call lord Douglas to protect his blood.

Nor. The blood of Douglas will protect itself.

Lady R. But we shall need both friends and favour boy,
To wrest thy lands and lordship from the gripe
Of Randolph and his kinsman. Yet I think
My tale will move each gentle heart to pity,
My life incline the virtuous to believe.

Nor. To be the son of Douglas is to me
Inheritance enough. Declare my birth,
And in the field I'll seek for fame and fortune.

Lady R. Thou dost not know what perils and injustice
Await the poor man's valour. Oh, my son!
The noblest blood in all the land's abash'd,
Having no lacquey but pale poverty.
Too long hast thou been thus attended, Douglas,
Too long hast thou been deem'd a peasant's child.
The wanton heir of some inglorious chief
Perhaps has scorn'd thee in thy youthful sports,
Whilst thy indignant spirit swell'd in vain.
Such contumely thou no more shalt bear:
But how I purpose to redress thy wrongs
Must be hereafter told. Prudence directs
That we should part before yon chief's return.
Retire, and from thy rustic follower's hand
Receive a billet, which thy mother's care,
Anxious to see thee, dictated before
This casual opportunity arose
Of private conference. Its purport mark;
For, as I there appoint, we meet again:
Leave me, my son; and frame thy manners still
To Norval's, not to noble Douglas' state.

Nor. I will remember. Where is Norval now,
That good old man?
Lady R. At hand conceal'd he lies,
An useful witness. But beware, my son,
Of yon Glenalvon; in his guilty breast
Resides a villain's shrewdness, ever prone
To false conjecture. He hath grieved my heart.
Nor. Has he indeed? Then let yon false Glenalvon
Beware of me. [*Exit.*
Lady R. There burst the smother'd flame.—
Oh, thou all-righteous and eternal King!
Who father of the fatherless art call'd,
Protect my son!—Thy inspiration, Lord!
Hath fill'd his bosom with that sacred fire,
Which in the breasts of his forefather's burn'd:
Set him on high like them, that he may shine
The star and glory of his native land!
Then let the minister of death descend,
And bear my willing spirit to its place.
Yonder they come. How do bad women find
Unchanging aspects to conceal their guilt,
When I, by reason and by justice urged,
Full hardly can dissemble with these men
In nature's pious cause?

Enter LORD RANDOLPH *and* GLENALVON.

Lord R. Yon gallant chief,
Of arms enamour'd, all repose disclaims.
Lady R. Be not, my lord, by his example sway'd.
Arrange the business of to-morrow now,
And when you enter speak of war no more. [*Exit.*
Lord R. 'Tis so, by Heaven! her mien, her voice, her eye,
And her impatience to be gone, confirm it.
Glen. He parted from her now. Behind the mount,
Amongst the trees, I saw him glide along.
Lord R. For sad sequester'd virtue she's renown'd.

Glen. Most true, my lord.
Lord R. Yet this distinguish'd dame
Invites a youth, the acquaintance of a day,
Alone to meet her at the midnight hour.
This assignation, [*Shews a letter.*] the assassin freed,
Her manifest affection for the youth,
Might breed suspicions in a husband's brain:
Whose gentle consort all for love had wedded;
Much more in mine. Matilda never loved me.
Let no man after me a woman wed,
Whose heart he knows he has not; though she brings
A mine of gold, a kingdom for her dowry.
For let her seem, like the night's shadowy queen,
Cold and contemplative—he cannot trust her;
She may, she will, bring shame and sorrow on him;
The worst of sorrow, and the worst of shames!
Glen. Yield not, my lord, to such afflicting thoughts,
But let the spirit of an husband sleep,
Till your own senses make a sure conclusion.
This billet must to blooming Norval go:
At the next turn awaits my trusty spy;
I'll give it him refitted for his master.
In the close thicket take your secret stand;
The moon shines bright, and your own eyes may judge
Of their behaviour.
Lord R. Thou dost counsel well.
Glen. Permit me now to make one slight essay;
Of all the trophies, which vain mortals boast,
By wit, by valour, or by wisdom won,
The first and fairest in a young man's eye
Is woman's captive heart. Successful love
With glorious fumes intoxicates the mind,
And the proud conqueror in triumph moves,
Air-borne, exalted above vulgar men,
Lord R. And what avails this maxim?
Glen. Much, my lord.
Withdraw a little; I'll accost young Norval,

And with ironical derisive counsel
Explore his spirit. If he is no more
Than humble Norval, by thy favour raised,
Brave as he is, he'll shrink astonish'd from me:
But if he be the favourite of the fair,
Loved by the first of Caledonia's dames,
He'll turn upon me, as the lion turns
Upon the hunter's spear.

Lord R. 'Tis shrewdly thought.

Glen. When we grow loud, draw near. But let my lord
His rising wrath restrain.— [*Exit* RANDOLPH.
'Tis strange, by Heaven!
That she should run full tilt her fond career
To one so little known. She, too, that seem'd
Pure as the winter stream, when ice, emboss'd,
Whitens its course. Even I did think her chaste,
Whose charity exceeds not. Precious sex!
Whose deeds lascivious pass Glenalvon's thoughts!

Enter NORVAL.

His port I love: he's in a proper mood
To chide the thunder, if at him it roar'd.— [*Aside.*
Has Norval seen the troops?

Nor. The setting sun
With yellow radiance lighten'd all the vale;
And as the warriors moved, each polish'd helm,
Corslet, or spear, glanced back his gilded beams.
The hill they climbed, and, halting at its top,
Of more than mortal size, tow'ring, they seem'd
An host angelic, clad in burning arms.

Glen. Thou talk'st it well; no leader of our host
In sounds more lofty speaks of glorious war.

Nor. If I shall e'er acquire a leader's name,
My speech will be less ardent. Novelty
Now prompts my tongue, and youthful admiration
Vents itself freely; since no part is mine
Of praise pertaining to the great in arms.

Glen. You wrong yourself, brave sir, your martial deeds
Have rank'd you with the great. But mark me, Norval:
Lord Randolph's favour now exalts your youth
Above his veterans of famous service.
Let me, who know these soldiers, counsel you.
Give them all honour: seem not to command;
Else they will scarcely brook your late sprung power,
Which nor alliance props, nor birth adorns.
Nor. Sir, I have been accustom'd all my days
To hear and speak the plain and simple truth:
And though I have been told, that there are men
Who borrow friendship's tongue to speak their scorn,
Yet in such language I am little skill'd.
Therefore I thank Glenalvon for his counsel,
Although it sounded harshly. Why remind
Me of my birth obscure? Why slur my power
With such contemptuous terms?
Glen. I did not mean
To gall your pride, which now I see is great.
Nor. My pride!
Glen. Suppress it, as you wish to prosper.
Your pride's excessive. Yet, for Randolph's sake,
I will not leave you to its rash direction.
If thus you swell, and frown at high-born men,
Think you, will they endure a shepherd's scorn?
Nor. A shepherd's scorn!
Glen. Yes, if you presume
To bend on soldiers these disdainful eyes,
As if you took the measure of their minds,
And said in secret, you're no match for me,
What will become of you?
Nor. If this were told!—— [*Aside.*
Hast thou no fears for thy presumptuous self?
Glen. Ha! dost thou threaten me?
Nor. Didst thou not hear?

Glen. Unwillingly I did; a nobler foe
Had not been question'd thus. But such as thee—
Nor. Whom dost thou think me?
Glen. Norval.
Nor. So I am——
And who is Norval in Glenalvon's eye?
Glen. A peasant's son, a wandering beggar boy;
At best no more; even if he speaks the truth.
Nor. False as thou art, dost thou suspect my truth?
Glen. Thy truth! thou'rt all a lie; and false as hell
Is the vain-glorious tale thou told'st to Randolph.
Nor If I were chain'd, unarm'd, and bedrid old
Perhaps I should revile; but as I am,
I have no tongue to rail. The humble Norval
Is of a race, who strive not but with deeds.
Did I not fear to freeze thy shallow valour,
And make thee sink too soon beneath my sword,
I'd tell thee—what thou art. I know thee well.
Glen. Didst thou not know Glenalvon, born to command
Ten thousand slaves like thee——
Nor. Villain, no more!
Draw and defend thy life. I did design
To have defy'd thee in another cause;
But Heaven accelerates its vengeance on thee.
Now for my own and Lady Randolph's wrongs.

Enter LORD RANDOLPH.

Lord R. Hold, I command you both. The man that stirs,
Makes me his foe.
Nor. Another voice than thine
That threat had vainly sounded, noble Randolph.

Glen. Hear him, my lord; he's wond'rous condescending!
Mark the humility of shepherd Norval!
Nor. Now you may scoff in safety.
[*Sheathes his sword.*
Lord R. Speak not thus,
Taunting each other; but unfold to me
The cause of quarrel; then I judge betwixt you.
Nor. Nay, my good lord, though I revere you much,
My cause I plead not, nor demand your judgment.
I blush to speak: I will not, cannot speak
The opprobrious words, that I from him have borne.
To the liege lord of my dear native land
I owe a subject's homage: but even him
And his high arbitration I'd reject.
Within my bosom reigns another lord;
Honour, sole judge and umpire of itself.
If my free speech offend you, noble Randolph,
Revoke your favours, and let Norval go
Hence as he came, alone, but not dishonoured.
Lord R. Thus far I'll mediate with impartial voice;
The ancient foe of Caledonia's land
Now waves his banners o'er her frighted fields;
Suspend your purpose till your country's arms
Repel the bold invader: then decide
The private quarrel.
Glen. I agree to this.
Nor. And I.

Enter SERVANT.

Serv. The banquet waits.
Lord R. We come. [*Exit with* SERVANT.
Glen. Norval,
Let not our variance mar the social hour,
Nor wrong the hospitality of Randolph.
Nor frowning anger, nor yet wrinkled hate,

Shall stain my countenance. Smooth thou thy brow:
Nor let our strife disturb the gentle dame.
Nor. Think not so lightly, sir, of my resentment.
When we contend again, our strife is mortal.
[*Exeunt*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

A Wood.

Enter DOUGLAS.

Doug. This is the place, the centre of the grove;
Here stands the oak, the monarch of the wood.
How sweet and solemn is this midnight scene
The silver moon, unclouded, holds her way
Through skies, where I could count each little star.
The fanning west wind scarcely stirs the leaves;
The river, rushing o'er its pebbled bed,
Imposes silence, with a stilly sound.
In such a place as this, at such an hour,
If ancestry can be in aught believed,
Descending spirits have conversed with man,
And told the secrets of the world unknown.

Enter OLD NORVAL.

Old Nor. 'Tis he. But what if he should chide me hence?
His just reproach I fear.
[DOUGLAS *turns aside, and sees him.*
Forgive, forgive;
Canst thou forgive the man, the selfish man,
Who bred Sir Malcom's heir a shepherd's son?
Doug. Welcome to me. Thou art my father still:

Thy wished-for presence now completes my joy.
Welcome to me; my fortunes thou shalt share,
And ever honour'd with thy Douglas live.
Old Nor. And dost thou call me father! Oh, my son!
I think that I could die, to make amends
For the great wrong I did thee. 'Twas my crime
Which in the wilderness so long conceal'd
The blossom of thy youth.
Doug. Not worse the fruit,
That in the wilderness the blossom blow'd.
Amongst the shepherds, in the humble cot,
I learn'd some lessons, which I'll not forget,
When I inhabit yonder lofty towers.
I, who was once a swain, will ever prove
The poor man's friend; and, when my vassals bow,
Norval shall smooth the crested pride of Douglas.
Old Nor. Let me but live to see thine exaltation!
Yet grievous are my fears. Oh, leave this place,
And those unfriendly towers!
Doug. Why should I leave them?
Old Nor. Lord Randolph and his kinsman seek your life.
Doug. How know'st thou that?
Old Nor. I will inform you how.
When evening came, I left the secret place
Appointed for me by your mother's care,
And fondly trod in each accustom'd path
That to the castle leads. Whilst thus I ranged,
I was alarm'd with unexpected sounds
Of earnest voices. On the persons came.
Unseen I lurk'd, and heard them name
Each other as they talk'd, Lord Randolph this,
And that Glenalvon. Still of you they spoke,
And of the lady; threat'ning was their speech,
Though but imperfectly my ear could hear it.
'Twas strange, they said, a wonderful discovery;
And ever and anon they vow'd revenge!

Doug. Revenge! for what?
Old Nor. For being what you are,
Sir Malcolm's heir: how else have you offended?
When they were gone, I hied me to my cottage,
And there sat musing how I best might find
Means to inform you of their wicked purpose,
But I could think of none. At last, perplex'd,
I issued forth, encompassing the tower
With many a weary step and wishful look.
Now Providence hath brought you to my sight,
Let not your too courageous spirit scorn
The caution which I give.
Doug. I scorn it not;
My mother warn'd me of Glenalvon's baseness;
But I will not suspect the noble Randolph.
In our encounter with the vile assassins,
I mark'd his brave demeanour; him I'll trust.
Old Nor. I fear you will too far.
Doug. Here in this place
I wait my mother's coming; she shall know
What thou hast told; her counsel I will follow;
And cautious ever are a mother's counsels.
You must depart; your presence may prevent
Our interview.
Old Nor. My blessing rest upon thee!
Oh, may Heaven's hand, which saved thee from the wave,
And from the sword of foes, be near thee still;
Turning mischance, if aught hangs o'er thy head,
All upon mine! [*Exit.*
Doug. He loves me like a parent;
And must, shall not, lose the son he loves,
Although his son has found a nobler father.
Eventful day! how hast thou changed my state!
Once on the cold and winter-shaded side
Of a bleak hill, mischance had rooted me,
Never to thrive, child of another soil;
Transplanted now to the gay sunny vale,

Like the green thorn of May my fortune flowers.
Ye glorious stars! high heaven's resplendent host!
To whom I oft have of my lot complain'd,
Hear and record my soul's unalter'd wish!
Dead or living, let me but be renown'd!
May Heaven inspire some fierce gigantic Dane
To give a bold defiance to our host;
Before he speaks it out I will accept:
Like Douglas conquer, or like Douglas die.

Enter LADY RANDOLPH.

Lady R. My son! I heard a voice——
Doug. The voice was mine.
Lady R. Didst thou complain alone to nature's ear,
That thus in dusky shades, at midnight hours,
By stealth the mother and the son should meet?
[*Embraces him.*
Doug. No; on this happy day, this better birth-day,
My thoughts and words are all of hope and joy.
Lady R. Sad fear and melancholy still divide
The empire of my breast with hope and joy.
Now hear what I advise—
Doug. First, let me tell
What may the tenour of your counsel change.
Lady R. My heart forebodes some evil!
Doug. 'Tis not good——
At eve, unseen by Randolph and Glenalvon,
The good old Norval in the grove o'erheard
Their conversation: oft they mention'd me,
With dreadful threat'nings; you they sometimes named;
'Twas strange, they said, a wonderful discovery:
And ever and anon they vow'd revenge!
Lady R. Defend us, gracious heav'n! we are betray'd;
They have found out the secret of thy birth:
It must be so. That is the great discovery.
Sir Malcolm's heir is come to claim his own;

And they will be revenged. Perhaps even now,
Arm'd and prepared for murder, they but wait
A darker and more silent hour, to break
Into the chamber, where they think thou sleep'st.
This moment, this, heav'n hath ordain'd to save thee!
Fly to the camp, my son!

Doug. And leave you here?
No: to the castle let us go together:
Call up the ancient servants of your house,
Who in their youth did eat your father's bread,
Then tell them loudly, that I am your son.
If in the breasts of men one spark remains
Of sacred love, fidelity, or pity,
Some in your cause will arm. I ask but few
To drive those spoilers from my father's house.

Lady R. Oh, Nature, Nature! what can check thy force!
Thou genuine offspring of the daring Douglas!
But rush not on destruction: save thyself,
And I am safe. To me they mean no harm.
Thy stay but risks thy precious life in vain.
That winding path conducts thee to the river.
Cross where thou see'st a broad and beaten way,
Which, running eastward, leads thee to the camp.
Instant demand admittance to Lord Douglas;
Show him these jewels which his brother wore.
Thy look, thy voice, will make him feel the truth,
Which I, by certain proof, will soon confirm.

Doug. I yield me, and obey: but yet my heart
Bleeds at this parting. Something bids me stay
And guard a mother's life. Oft have I read
Of wondrous deeds by one bold arm achieved.
Our foes are two; no more: let me go forth,
And see if any shield can guard Glenalvon.

Lady R. If thou regard'st thy mother, or rever'st
Thy father's memory, think of this no more.
One thing I have to say before we part:
Long wert thou lost; and thou art found, my child,

In a most fearful season. War and battle
I have great cause to dread. Too well I see
Which way the current of thy temper sets;
To-day I've found thee. Oh! my long-lost hope.
If thou to giddy valour givest the rein,
To-morrow I may lose my son for ever!
The love of thee, before thou saw'st the light,
Sustain'd my life when thy brave father fell.
If thou shalt fall, I have not love nor hope
In this waste world! My son, remember me!

Doug. What shall I say? How can I give you comfort?
The god of battles of my life dispose
As may be best for you! for whose dear sake
I will not bear myself as I resolved.
But yet consider, as no vulgar name
That which I boast sounds amongst martial men,
How will inglorious caution suit my claim?
The post of fate unshrinking I maintain.
My country's foes must witness who I am.
On the invaders' heads I'll prove my birth,
Till friends and foes confess the genuine strain.
If in this strife I fall, blame not your son,
Who, if he live not honour'd, must not live.

Lady R. I will not utter what my bosom feels.
Too well I love that valour, which I warn.
Farewell, my son! my counsels are but vain,
[*Embracing.*
And as high heaven hath will'd it, all must be.
Gaze not on me, thou wilt mistake the path:
I'll point it out again. [*Exeunt.*

[*Just as they are separating,*

Enter from the wood, LORD RANDOLPH, *and* GLENALVON.

Lord R. Not in her presence.
Now——

Glen. I'm prepared.
Lord R. No: I command thee, stay;
I go alone: it never shall be said,
That I took odds to combat mortal man.
The noblest vengeance is the most complete. [*Exit.*
[GLENALVON *makes some steps to the same side of the stage, listens and speaks.*
Glen. Demons of death, come settle on my sword,
And to a double slaughter guide it home!
The lover and the husband both must die.
Lord R. [*Behind the scenes.*] Draw, villain! draw!
Doug. [*Without.*] Assail me not, Lord Randolph;
Not as thou lovest thyself. [*Clashing of swords.*
Glen. Now is the time— [*He runs out.*

Enter LADY RANDOLPH, *at the opposite side of the stage, faint and breathless.*

Lady R. Lord Randolph, hear me; all shall be thine own;
But spare! O spare my son!

Enter DOUGLAS, *with a sword in each hand.*

Doug. My mother's voice!
I can protect thee still.
Lady R. He lives! he lives!
For this, for this, to heaven eternal praise!
But sure, I saw thee fall.
Doug. It was Glenalvon.
Just as my arm had master'd Randolph's sword,
The villain came behind me; but I slew him.
Lady R. Behind thee! Ah! thou'rt wounded! Oh, my child,
How pale thou look'st! And shall I lose thee now?
Doug. Do not despair: I feel a little faintness;
I hope it will not last. [*Leans upon his sword.*
Lady R. There is no hope!

And we must part! The hand of death is on thee!
O my beloved child! O Douglas, Douglas!
[DOUGLAS *growing more and more faint.*
Doug. Too soon we part: I have not long been Douglas.
O destiny! hardly thou deal'st with me:
Clouded and hid, a stranger to myself,
In low and poor obscurity I've lived
Lady R. Has heaven preserved thee for an end like this?
Doug. Oh, had I fallen as my brave fathers fell,
Turning with fatal arm the tide of battle!
Like them I should have smiled and welcomed death;
But thus to perish by a villain's hand!
Cut off from nature's and from glory's course,
Which never mortal was so fond to run!
Lady R. Hear, justice, hear! are these the fruits of virtue? [DOUGLAS *falls.*
Doug. Unknown I die; no tongue shall speak of me.
Some noble spirits, judging by themselves,
May yet conjecture what I might have proved,
And think life only wanting to my fame:
But who shall comfort thee?
Lady R. Despair, despair!
Doug. Oh, had it pleased high heaven to let me live
A little while!—my eyes, that gaze on thee,
Grow dim apace!—my mother—— [*Dies.*

Enter LORD RANDOLPH *and* ANNA.

Lord R. Thy words, thy words of truth have pierced my heart,
I am the stain of knighthood and of arms.
Oh! if my brave deliverer survives
The traitor's sword——
Anna. Alas! look there, my lord.

Lord R. The mother and her son! how curst I am!
Was I the cause? No: I was not the cause
Yon matchless villain did seduce my soul
To frantic jealousy.
Anna. My lady lives.
Lord R. But my deliverer's dead!
Lady R. [*Recovering.*] Where am I now? Still in this wretched world!
Grief cannot break a heart so hard as mine.
Lord R. Oh, misery!
Amidst thy raging grief I must proclaim
My innocence.
Lady R. Thy innocence!
Lord R. My guilt
Is innocence compared with what thou think's
Lady R. Of thee I think not: what have I to do
With thee, or any thing? My son! my son!
My beautiful! my brave! how proud was I
Of thee, and of thy valour! my fond heart
O'erflow'd this day with transport, when I thought
Of growing old amidst a race of thine.
A little while
Was I a wife! a mother not so long!
What am I now?—I know.—But I shall be
That only whilst I please; for such a son,
And such a husband, make a woman bold. [*Runs out.*
Lord R. Follow her, Anna: I myself would follow,
But in this rage she must abhor my presence.
[*Exit* ANNA.
Cursed, cursed Glenalvon, he escaped too well,
Though slain and baffled by the hand he hated.
Foaming with rage and fury to the last,
Cursing his conqueror, the felon died

Enter ANNA.

Anna. My lord! my lord!
Lord R. Speak; I can hear of horror.

Anna. Horror, indeed!
Lord R. Matilda?——
Anna. Is no more:
She ran, she flew like lightning up the hill,
Nor halted till the precipice she gain'd,
Beneath whose low'ring top the river falls
Ingulf'd in rifted rocks.
Oh, had you seen her last despairing look!
Upon the brink she stood, and cast her eyes
Down on the deep; then lifting up her head
And her white hands to heaven, seeming to say,
Why am I forced to this? she plunged herself
Into the empty air..
Lord R. I will not vent,
In vain complaints, the passion of my soul.
I'll to the battle, where the man, that makes
Me turn aside, must threaten worse than death.
Thou, faithful to thy mistress, take this ring,
Full warrant of my power. Let every rite
With cost and pomp upon their funerals wait;
For Randolph hopes he never shall return. [*Exeunt*

THE END.

Printed by A. and R. Spottiswoode,
Printers-Street, London.

ROYAL
BOMBAY

COUNTESS OF SALISBURY

LADY SALISBURY — FORBEAR YOUR IMPIOUS HAND.

ACT. III. SCENE. II.

PAINTED BY W. M. CRAIG. PUBLISHED BY LONGMAN & CO. &c. ENGRAVED BY J. B[illegible]

THE

COUNTESS OF SALISBURY

A TRAGEDY,

IN FIVE ACTS;

BY HALL HARTSON, ESQ.

AS PERFORMED AT THE THEATRES ROYAL,

DRURY LANE AND COVENT GARDEN.

PRINTED UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE MANAGERS,

FROM THE PROMPT BOOK.

WITH REMARKS

BY MRS INCHBALD.

LONDON,

PRINTED FOR LONGMAN, HURST, REES, ORME, AND BROWN, PATERNOSTER-ROW.

EDINBURGH:
Printed by James Ballantyne and Co.

REMARKS.

By the title, and the names of the characters in this tragedy, it might be supposed to be founded upon history; but if the events here recorded are facts, they are not acknowledged as such by the author, or recognized as such by the public.

In the "Biographia Dramatica," it is said, "the tragedy of the Countess of Salisbury derives its foundation from some incidents in Dr Leland's novel of Longsword, Earl of Salisbury."

This Dr Leland, a native of Dublin, and a divine of the established church there, wrote "A History of Ireland;" also "The Life of Philip of Macedon;" and "The Principles of Human Eloquence," which was attacked by Warburton. He was, besides, the translator of many learned works.

The writer of this tragedy, Hall Hartson, Esq. was of Ireland, educated in the college of Dublin, and the pupil of the reverend doctor just named.

To his tutor's pen many parts of this play are attributed; though it does not appear that any peculiar degree of learning or knowledge, such as the doctor possessed, was requisite in the composition. It is an amusing little story to read; but, in the acting, it

has proved, to the present taste, so languid, that it seems, at this time, to be almost withdrawn from the stage.

Mr Hartson, in an advertisement he published in the original edition of the play, gives the honour of its success, as a dramatic work, to the inimitable acting of Mr Barry and Mrs Dancer, in the parts of the Earl and Countess.

No doubt that excellent talents, in the representation of those two personages, were necessary to support the piece; and as the Mrs Dancer, whom the author has mentioned, was afterwards the wife of Barry, and no other than the famed Mrs Barry and Crawford, it is probable that but little flattery was contained in his compliment.

"The Countess of Salisbury" was first acted in Ireland, and then appeared at the Haymarket theatre, during the management of Foote; where, in defiance of his comic powers, it had equal attraction with the dramas in which he performed; and, in spite of fine summer evenings, crowded the theatre with a delighted audience.

When Mr and Mrs Barry removed to Drury Lane theatre, the tragedy was also transplanted to that stage; but here, though it was productive, it flourished not so well as in the warmer climate of the Haymarket. It has been once revived since Mrs Siddons's appearance in London, and she acted the Countess; but, after a few nights, a cold reception nipped all its blossoms, and it now blooms only for the reader.

The author published this work in 1767—he never after wrote for the stage, but produced a poem, entitled "Youth."

Very few particulars are farther known of Mr Hartson, except that, soon after this tragedy was played, he became tutor to a young man of fortune, with whom he resided in the environs of London for a few years; and that he died in March, 1773, soon after the publication of his poem.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

	DRURY-LANE.	COVENT-GARDEN.
ALWIN	*Mr Barry.*	*Mr Powell.*
RAYMOND	*Mr Reddish.*	*Mr Bensley.*
GREY	*Mr Parker.*	*Mr Clarke.*
MORTON	*Mr Palmer.*	*Mr Perry.*
SIR ARDOLF	*Mr Bannister.*	*Mr Fox.*
LEROCHES	*Mr Strange.*	*Mr Gardner.*
LORD WILLIAM	*Miss Palmer.*	*Miss Cockayne.*
ELEANOR	*Mrs Reddish.*	*Mrs Dubellamy.*
COUNTESS OF SALISBURY	*Mrs Barry.*	*Mrs Yates.*

KNIGHTS, PEASANT, &c.

SCENE—Salisbury Castle, and the Country about it.

THE

COUNTESS OF SALISBURY.

ACT THE FIRST.

SCENE I.

An Avenue leading to a Gothic Castle.

Enter GREY *and* FIRST KNIGHT.

Grey. A messenger dispatch'd by Lady Salisbury!
Knight. And in the specious guise he wore, had pass'd
Unquestion'd, had not I, in happy season,
Approach'd, even as th' unwary centinels
Half oped the gate. By threats o'erawed in part,
In part through hope of favour won, he own'd,
At length, by whom employed, whither bent,
And for what purpose.
Grey Say——
Knight. Strait to repair
To Marlborough; where now, as fame reports,
Our king resides, with all his peers; and there
To seek the Lord de Warren; to what end
This paper will, as I suppose, inform you—
I was about to bear it to Lord Raymond.

Grey. That care be mine. Henceforward it concerns
Us near, our vigilance be doubly firm.

[*Exit* KNIGHT.

GREY *reads.*

The COUNTESS OF SALISBURY, *to her illustrious Friend, the* LORD DE WARREN.

I have lost my husband—Me and my lands Lord Raymond claims, as by royal grant assigned to him. He has banished my train, encompassed me with his creatures, and holds me a prisoner in my own castle. If the memory of thy noble friend be dear to thee, haste and rescue the afflicted ELA.

How near was Raymond's hope, the beauteous hope
He tended with unceasing care, how near
My rising fortunes marr'd—I like not this:
Her, and her rich domains, he would possess;
Yet in his breast there lives that kind of heart
Withholds him from the path that's nearest—He
That would be great, must first be bold.
I hate those motley'd characters;
Something, I know not what, 'twixt good and ill,
Yet neither absolute; all good, all ill
For me—That day, saith he, that happy day,
Which sees the countess mine, shall amply pay
Thy services: a doubtful balance this
Whereon my fortunes hang—This way he moves;
And, by his gait and gesture, ill at ease—
We must be firm;
My hopes demand it, and the time admits
No weak, no scrupulous delay—

Enter RAYMOND.

Ray. To sue,

But ever without grace to sue—Oh Grey
I am even weary of the vain pursuit.
Grey. It is, in truth, my lord, an irksome labour.
Ray. But now I cast me at the fair one's feet;
Pleaded my passion with whatever arts
Might best the gentle purpose aid; but she,
Instead of such return as I might hope,
Repaid me with an eye of cold contempt.
Of her late gallant lord she spoke; his merits,
In opposition hateful, placed to mine.
Urged then with recollection of her wrongs,
Like the loud torrent, with steep winter rains
O'ercharged, in all the loose, ungovern'd sway
Of wrath and indignation, she assail'd me.
Grey. And did my lord, in this unseemly fashion,
Hear all with equal temper? Waked he not
With such a peal—
Ray. Thou know'st not what it is
To love like me—Long time (for passion now
Had shed o'er all her charms a brighter glow,
That like Jove's daughter most she look'd, severe
In youthful beauty,) long I lay, o'erawed
And silenced, as by some superior being,
Till waked by pride, quick from the floor I sprung;
Warn'd her how she provoked my power;
'Twas great, 'twas now within these walls supreme;
I long had gently woo'd her, but that love,
Though patient, would not always brook disdain.
Grey 'Twas well: and what ensued?
Kay Silence at first,
Then tears; bright drops, like May-morn dews, that fall
From the sweet-blossom'd thorn. Back in her chair
She sunk—Oh! had you seen her then, dissolved
In all the soft the lovely languishment
Of woe; while at her knee, with countenance
Most piteous, stood her beauteous boy, and look'd
As if each tear, which from his mother fell,

Would force a passage to his little heart—
I fled; else had I kneel'd, and wept myself
As well as she.
Grey. O, shame to manhood!—suits
Such weakness with our hopes?
In brief, would you partake the lady's bed?
Ray. What means the question?
Grey. Look on that, my lord:
Better reluctant come, than not at all.
Ray. How came this to your hand?
Grey. By one whose cares
Of thee demand no trivial recompense.
His wakeful eye it was descried the bearer;
Else had the watch, with all their vigilance,
Proved insufficient.
Ray. My better angel interposed.
Grey. Had this its purposed scope attain'd—my lord,
Were this but whisper'd in our Henry's ear—
He gave the royal nod, you say: true, he
Permitted, but thus far; that you should woo
The lady, and, her choice approving, wed;
No more. By us the public ear is told
She hath approved: our artifice hath spread
The rumour: and with some it is received
That she is now your full espoused consort:
But truth, my lord, long cannot rest conceal'd;
It will abroad, of that be sure, in spite
Of all our studied wiles.
Ray. What's to be done?
Grey. 'Tis critical, and must be managed nicely—
But see, with Eleanor the countess comes;
And in her hand the young Lord William. Here
Her custom is to walk; retire we now;
And thou observe the counsels of a friend, [*Exeunt.*

Enter LADY SALISBURY, LORD WILLIAM, *and* ELEANOR.

Lady S. Talk'st thou of patience? What! the very roof,
That should protect and shelter me, become
My prison! Awed, and threatened, as I am,
By this intruder!—Cruel destiny!
Had I not more than common griefs before?
Eleanor. In evil hour thy hospitable gates
Were open'd to receive him.
Lady S. Unguarded that I was!—But who could then
Foresee the purpose of his coming?
Eleanor. Who
Can think even yet, that once repulsed, he e'en
Would thus presume?
Lady S. Is there no succour then?
No generous hand to vindicate my wrongs?—
Oh, Salisbury! Salisbury! why, if yet thou liv'st—
Fond hope! he lives not, else with speed of thought
Would he repair to his afflicted Ela.
Eleanor. Why, dearest lady, will you yield you up
A prey to purposed sorrow? Time is fruitful;
And the next hour perhaps may bring thee comfort.
Lady S. Day after day I have watch'd the joyless hours;
Night after night, when some fleet courier sent
Before perchance, or letter fraught with sweet
Assurance of his safety might appear;
Five tedious moons have pass'd since first were told
The dismal tidings; no fleet courier sent
Before, alas! nor letter with such sweet
Assurance yet appears—He's gone! he's lost!
And I shall never, never see him more.
Eleanor. Ah! suffer not the leaden hand of cold
Despair thus weigh thee down; I yet have hope—

Lady S. Away with hope, away. No, no; full loud,
As I remember, and outrageous blew
The storm, that even the solid fabric shook
Of yonder walls; deep-rooted oaks gave way;
Churches and spires were overturn'd; nor even
The peasant's humble roof escaped that hour.
The fleet, save only one, one luckless ship,
Have all return'd; my lord nor hath been seen
Alas! nor ever heard of since the storm.

Eleanor. Heaven visit her affliction, and bestow
That patience which she needs!

Lady S. No, Eleanor; no more shall he
To these deserted walls return. No more
Shall trophies, won by many a gallant deed,
Through the long hall in proud procession move;
No more fair Salisbury's battlements and towers
Re-echo to th' approaching trumpet's voice.
Never, oh! never more shall Ela run,
With throbbing bosom, at the well-known sound,
T' unlock his helmet, conquest-plumed, to strip
The cuishes from his manly thigh, or snatch
Quick from his breast the plated armour, wont
T' oppose my fond embrace—

Lord W. Mother, why do you speak so? you make me sad.

Lady S. It is too soon, my child, for thee to know
What sadness is.

Lord W. Will not my father come home soon?
Eleanor told me he would: she would not tell a lie!

Lady S. No, love.

Lord W. Then he will come?

Lady S. Sweet innocence! I fear he will not.

Lord W. I hope he is not sick?

Lady W. Go, lovely prattler, seek thy toys; go, go.

Lord W. I will, good mother; but don't be sad, or I shall be so too. [*Exit.*

Enter GREY.

Grey. As you are fair above all other women,
So may you lend to that I would implore,
A gracious ear.

Lady S. Without more preface, briefly speak thy suit.

Grey. To love, but ne'er to reap of love the sweet
Returns, is sure the worst of ills.

Lady S. And what of that?

Grey. Though love denied yet pity may do much
To sooth the wound that beauty gives—In brief,
Thou much-revered! my suit is in behalf of Raymond.

Lady S. Then I will spare us both some cost
Of words—In brief, I love him not, nor pity:
So tell thy lord—I would be private—hence!

Grey. Your words are brief indeed; but of that kind
I dare not, must not bear my lord.

Lady S. Must not!

Grey. 'Tis cruel toward the man who loves so fondly

Lady S. Doth he assume the specious name o love?
Love is a bright, a generous quality,
Heaven gave to noble minds; pure and unmix'd
With every grosser stuff; a goodly flower,
Shoots up and blossoms in great souls alone.

Grey. The mind, th' exalted soul thou nam'st, is his.
Lives there a youth more gentle of condition,
In fair accomplishments more graced, admired?
If beauty sway thy fond regards, if wealth,
I know not in fair England one with him
Can vie.

Lady S. Is then the star, the peerless star,
That late was gazed on, quite obscured? What though
He may have set, hath he not left a train
Of glory in the skies?—Th' illustrious name

Of Salisbury yet survives—If wealth—but mark me;
Were he of all the wealth possess'd from where
Th' East Indian bids the sun good morrow, to where
Th' Atlantic in her wide-extended lap
Receives him setting; could he in each hand
A thousand sceptres place, not all should bribe
Me to his bed—No, Salisbury! thou hast been
The husband of my early love; with thee
That love was all interr'd; and when I pluck
It forth again, gape wide that earth wherein
Thou liest, quick snatch me from the light of Heaven,
And swallow me within her lowest prison!

Grey. For pity's sake yet soften; for, oh sure
No former love could ever equal his;
No bosom boast the generous flame wherewith
Lord Raymond glows for thee, admired fair!

Lady S. Hear this, ye Heavens, and grant me patience—Where's
My people? where the freedom that I late
Was blest with? Wherefore is my palace throng'd
With strangers? Why, why are my gates shut up
And fortified against their rightful mistress?

Grey. Madam——

Lady S. Is this the love he boasts?
Is this the fair accomplish'd, this the gentle youth?
Must I recall to mind—Came he not
Even while the memory of my dear loved lord
Was green; while sorrow yet was in mine eyes?
Tears! ye will choak me—Came he not even then,
Like a spoiler came,
Added new anguish to th' afflicted heart,
And swell'd the current of the widow's tears.

Grey. Madam, were he that spoiler thou proclaim'st,
He need not now thus humbly sue for that
His power long since, unask'd, might have extorted.

Lady S. Ha! what art thou that thus presum'st to threaten?

Extorted!—Hence, thou rude one, bolder even
Than him who calls thee slave!
Grey. Madam, you speak
As though you knew me not.
Lady S. I know thee well—
To what concerns Lord Raymond, I have spoke
My final purpose fix'd:
For thee, I charge thee shun my presence; hence,
And learn the distance that befits thy calling.
Grey. Not ere I speak more fully to the cause—
Nay, lady, look not on me with so stern
An eye, but give me patient hearing—
Lady S. No more; I'll hear no more.
Grey. Not hear!—When next we meet—I will be heard. [*Exit.*
Lady S. What meant he, Eleanor—I will be heard!
Eleanor. Alas! I know not: but a soul he hath,
Prompt and alert to acts of desperate thinking.
Hardly thou art beset; O lady, lend
An ear to what thy Eleanor would counsel.
When next he comes (for that he hath obtain'd
Of Raymond leave to woo thee to his will,
I know) assume a gentler carriage. Seem
As though you may hereafter to his suit
Incline.
Lady S. Sincerity,
Thou, spotless as the snowy-vested hill,
Forgive me, if, by lawless power constrain'd,
I turn this once from thy long-trodden path;
It must be so——
Oh Salisbury! Salisbury! thou lamented shade!
Descend from these pure mansions, where thou sitt'st
Exalted; hover o'er me; and, as thou
Wert wont, support me in this hour of trial!
[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE 1.

An Apartment in the Castle.

Enter RAYMOND *and* GREY.

Grey. Away, my lord, away with every care;
The conflict's past, and fortune is our own—
Defeated once, again I sought the fair!
I sought her, and prevail'd.
Ray By all the joys, the nameless joys, that on
The precious hour of soft compliance wait,
I will requite thee nobly. Say, for much
My wonder's moved, how hast thou found
Such grace? How wrought this change, thus sudde
thus
Unhoped from her late bearing?
Grey. Uncertain is the sex—but that imports not.
It now remains, that proof, such proof be sought
Of Salisbury's fate, as by minute detail
Of circumstance shall with the lady gain
Prompt credence—Hear what I have devised, if you
Approve——

Enter a KNIGHT.

Knight. My lord, two strangers I have brought,
Within the precincts of the castle found.
Ray. Say'st thou? two strangers? of what quality?
Knight. With me they were of speech not over
prompt;
But by their outward guise they would seem men,
As with some pious purpose charged. Severe

The younger seems, but of excelling form;
And wishes to recruit his wearied limbs
Beneath the friendly covert of this roof.
Ray. Conduct them to our presence—[*Exit* KNIGHT.]
I were loth,
The weary traveller to dismiss my gates,
Unhospitably rude; yet none I wish,
While we are yet suspended at the nod
Of peevish and uncertain chance, approac..
These walls.

Enter KNIGHT, *with* ALWIN *and* LEROCHES.

Whence, and what are you?
Alwin. What we are,
These weeds, though we were silent, might unfol..
Alwin I am call'd, my fellow-traveller
Leroches. Our way was bent for Canterbury,
With purpose of a pious vow; o'ertaken
By weariness from travel, and desire
Of food, we journey'd hitherward, in hope
The lord of these fair turrets, first descried
At close of evening, might befriend our toils.
Ray. Whence have you come?
Alwin. From France, not many days.
Ray. Say, what occasion may have call'd you thither?
Alwin. To aid (Heav'n prosper long) my country's weal.
Ray. You are a soldier then?
Alwin. I have been such;
And to be such was my most dear inclining;
Smit with the love, even from my greenest youth,
Of honest arms. Some share of fame I too
Atchieved—But ill the soldier it beseems
To trumpet his own praises.
Ray. Cease not so;
Though in the school of war untutor'd, much
It pleaseth me to hear the brave man's labours.

Alwin. None but have heard how some time since was sent
(To claim of Lewis certain lands usurp'd)
A puissant force——
Ray. Were you therein employ'd?
Alwin. Beneath the royal banner I enroll'd,
As was my bent, in quest of fame.
Ray. Indeed!
Lord Salisbury then perchance of thee was known?
Alwin. I knew him well; our liege's near ally,
And second to Duke Richmond in command.
Fast by his side was my allotted post
Upon the marshall'd field: by him I fought,
For him had died.
Ray. Of him fame loudly speaks,
That in those wars he was a gallant man.
Alwin. He was not wont, while others bravely fought,
To look unactive on.
Ler. A foe like him
France never knew, of all that warrior host,
Which like an inundation England pour'd
On her affrighted shores——
Ray. But what
Have proved his latter fortunes I should wis
To learn—Say, courteous stranger, if thou canst,
Of this renowned lord: a rumour hath
Long since prevail'd, that he on Gallia's coast
Was wreck'd with all his crew.
Alwin. What cause there was
Of such report, alas! these eyes have seen;
How true in part it is, too sure this tongue
Can testify.
Ray I pray you let us hear.
Alwin. O'ercharged with human prey, fell war had ceased
To walk his wasteful round; well pleased we turn'd
Us from the blood-stain'd field; exulting each

With some rich spoil, trophies by valiant dint
Of arms atchieved. Forthwith the eager host
Embark.
And now the chalky clifts on Albion's coast
T' our straining view appear'd; th' exulting crew
With peals redoubled greet the well-known shores—
Ill-fated men! in vain the anxious dame
Oft mounts the high raised tower, thence earnest looks
Haply if her wish'd-for lord may come; in vain,
The prattling boy oft asks her of his sire,
That never, never shall return.
Ray. Proceed,
Good stranger; what was the event?
Alwin. Anon
The winds began to shift; up rose a storm,
And heaved the bosom of the troubled deep.
On the swoln billow sits enthroned grim Death,
And shakes his fatal dart—The fleet, which late
In such fair order sail'd, is now dispersed.
Before the wind we drove, left to the mercy
Of the wild waves, and all-disposing Heaven—
For me a slender plank, next to the hand
Of some good angel, bore me to the shore.
Of full five hundred gallant lives, which late
Embark'd, not one that fatal hour survived.
Ray. Save only thee?
Alwin. Save only me.
Ray. Speak, now secure, for nearly it concerns
My quiet, speak—was Salisbury of your crew?
Alwin. Alas! too sure.
Ray. Enough—Thy courtesy
Of us may well, and shall be well requited.
Of this our friend accept mean time his prompt
Regards; anon we shall be glad to hold
Some further converse with you.
[*Exeunt* ALWIN, LEROCHES, *and* KNIGHT.
Grey. Of this stranger, what thinks my lord?
Ray. As of an angel, sent

To waft me on his wings strait to the summit
Of all my wishes—With what a gallant grace
He bears him!—Much I wish to hear him speak
Again; to hear the battles he has fought,
And all the story of his life and fortunes.

Grey. That we shall learn hereafter: but 'tis meet
That he to Lady Salisbury first unfold
The sum of what he had reported.

Ray. Methinks
I now behold her, like some full-blown flower,
The fairest of the garden, late o'ercharged
With showers, her head declining sad, whilst he
Recounts the story of her Salisbury's fate.
Would she were mine without a tear;
Without a sigh!—But she must weep; she must;
Thereon my *all* depends—Oh wayward sorrow!
That wounds, yet, wounding, heals the lover. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

An Apartment.

LADY SALISBURY *reclining on a Couch.*

Enter ELEANOR.

Eleanor. Grief, that of time's fix'd periods for repose
Takes small account, hath lull'd her wearied senses:
The hour approaches, when, as is her custom,
She seeks the hallow'd shrine, and pious wakes
The voice of pure devotion to high Heaven:
I'll thither, and expect her—but she wakes—
How fares the mistress of my best regards?
Proved her slumbers sweet as were my wishes?

Lady S. Sweet, sweet, my Eleanor: so sweet, oh! 'would
I ne'er had waked. I dreamt, as wont on him
To dream, that I beheld his gracious form,
My bosom's lord; a while he stood, and seem'd
On me to smile, then flew to my embraces——
Ah fleeting ecstacy! 'twas but a dream.

Enter a KNIGHT.

Knight. Thy favour, lady; I am charged with news,
That much imports thy hearing: summon up
Thy powers; two strangers late have come, of whom
One brings assured tidings of thy lord.
Lady S. My lord——what——speak——
Knight. He saith he knew my lord
Of Salisbury well; that he was of his crew;
And with that peer embark'd from France.
Lady S. But—well—from France——
Knight. Lady, all must have
Their sorrows. Strait uprose a mighty tempest,
Dispersed the fleet o'er all the seas——
The storm—the fatal wreck—of all
The stranger gives most circumstantial proof.
Eleanor. Alas the tidings!—Dearest lady, give
Thy sorrows vent; thy bosom's overfraught,
And will find ease by letting loose its woes.
Lady S. Well, well——
Then he is lost, and all, all is despair.
Though languid, yet was hope not quite extinct—
Where, where's the stranger? Seek him, haste, that I
May hear him fully speak of all. [*Exit* KNIGHT.]
Methinks
'Twill be a desperate sort of soothing; to hang
Upon each sound, catch every circumstance
Of the sad story, and wring my aching heart
Till I am even surfeited with sorrow.
Eleanor. Behold, the stranger comes——

Enter ALWIN.

Lady S. Bear, bear me up, good Heaven!
That I may give full measure to my sorrow.
Alwin. Thy angel hover o'er thee, and support thee.
[*In an under voice.*
Lady S. The dead ere now
Have burst the prisons of the close-pent grave,
And apparitions strange of faith appear'd;
Perhaps thou too art but a shadow; let
Me grasp thee, for, as I have life, I think—
It is, it is my Salisbury! Oh my lord!
Lord S. My bosom's joy!
Lady S. And dost thou live indeed?
Amazing providence! He does! he does!
The vision was not vain.
[ELEANOR *goes aside, and exit.*
Lord S. And art thou, art thou then—
The same, by time or circumstance unchanged?
Lady S Unhoped reverse!—Hence, hence all former woes—
My lord! my life! hence, hence, be swallow'd up
All griefs, and lost in this most blissful hour.
Lord S. Thou art, I see, thou art the same, thou must;
Thou hast not yielded to another lord?
Lady S. Another lord!—And could you, did you think
'Twas so?
Lord S. Thus spoke loud rumour on my way:
Indeed I scarce could think it.
Lady S Oh! 'twas foul!
Indeed thou should'st not think it——
Lord S. Ever dear!
No more; my soul is satisfied, and thinks
Of nothing now but happiness and thee.
Lady S. Say then, thou wanderer—Oh! I have much

Of thee to ask, thou much to hear: how is't
I see thee, see thee thus? Where hast thou been?
What secret region hath so long detain'd thee?
Lord S. Oh thou! whose image, ever in my view,
Sustain'd me, angel-like, against the rough
And rapid current of adversity,
Should I recount the story of my fortunes,
Each circumstance, beginning from that day
We parted, to this hour, thine ear would be
Fatigued; the stars, ere I had ended, cease
To twinkle; and the morning's sun break in
Upon the unfinish'd tale; suffice it thee
To know the sum.
For England we embark'd, when, black and foul,
A tempest rising, quick upturn'd the seas,
And cast me forth upon a hostile shore.
Why need I tell thee, love, how, in disguise,
On foot, alone, I've toil'd my weary way,
Through dreary vale, o'er mountain wild; my bed
Oft of the blasted heath, whilst o'er my limbs
Dank night hath shaken her cold, dewy wings,
And the chill northern gale hath spent his breath
On my defenceless head?
Through what variety of strange events
I've come, Heav'n-guided, to behold, once more,
My wife!—But, ah! my son! our only hope!
My boy! what, what of him?
Lady S. Dear to these eyes
As is the new-born light of Heav'n! he lives;
Is well—But say, my lord, what would thy coming
Thus unattended, thus disguised?
Lord S. How I escaped from hard captivity,
And Gallia's coast, more leisure shall inform you.
My friend, Sir Ardolf, had but just embraced me,
(The first glad transports of our meeting o'er,)
When, with an honest tear, the good old man
In brief disclosed what fame had now reported;

That thou wert soon, or hadst, ere this, espoused
Earl Hubert's nephew, and sole purposed heir—
Lady S. Oh most unhallow'd, thus t' abuse
My unattainted love!—And could my lord—
Lord S. Yet hear me—Strait I grasp'd my sword;
And, single as I was, had sallied forth,
Had not my friend's sage counsels interposed.
By Ardolf sway'd, I veil'd me as thou see'st;
And, with a sharer in the dark intent,
Set forward on my way for Sal'sb'ry castle:
A simple hind's low cottage, not far hence,
Received us. Here, fast by the greenwood side,
We lodged; resolved, ourselves unknown, to prove
What doubtful rumour only had proclaim'd.
With this intent, at dusk of evening we
Forsook the cot—
Lady S. There needs no more; Heaven saw
Me, and was touch'd with pity—What a change
This hour! Sequester'd as I was, even like
The votarist; perhaps the destined prey
Of rude desire—
Lord S. O for to-morrow's slow returning nigh...
Lady S. Say, what of that, my lord?
Lord S. Revenge, revenge.
I'll tell thee—Soon as dark usurping night
Shall chase to-morrow's sun adown the skies,
Know, Ardolf, with a chosen troop of friends,
To that same cottage, arm'd, shall come to thy
Assistance.

Enter ELEANOR.

Eleanor. My lord, I heard the approach of hasty steps.
Lord S. I must again assume my borrowed seeming,
[*Takes up his hat and cloak.*
Farewell, my best, my ever dear delight.

Nor peace nor sleep shall visit me till I
Have given thee freedom, and revenged our wrongs.

Enter KNIGHT.

Knight. Lord Raymond, sir, forthwith expects your coming.

Lord S. I will attend him. Lady, fain would I
Have told thee less ungracious things; but all
Have their appointed trials. Learn to bear;
Convinced, the hand of Heaven, when it inflicts,
Prepares us oft for some superior good. [*Exeunt.*

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

The Castle.

Enter RAYMOND *and* GREY.

Ray. I see nor cause my joys to check, nor boast
As yet securely.

Grey. Perhaps, my lord, mine are but nicer fears,
Waked in a heart o'er anxious of thy welfare:
Yét hath the younger of those strangers raised
In me suspicions of alarming hue,
Lest, underneath this honest guise, there lurk
Some subtile mischief. Lady Salisbury saw him:
Their conference, as 'twas long, so was it held

In secret: 'would we had been present!
Ray. Granting
Our presence had been seemly, wherefore spoke
You not this counsel ere they met?
Grey. I saw not then the danger.
His honest carriage, and the recent change
Within her mind, had lull'd each nicer fear.
Ray. Till now unmoved, say? what hath waked suspicion?
Grey. I know not well—'would she were firmly thine,
Beyond the reach and grasp of wayward fortune!
The knight, whose office was to introduce
Him to the countess, he dismiss'd, ere they
Approach'd th' apartment.
Ray. Indeed!
Grey. This too—Is it not strange, though night and this,
Thy proffer'd roof, invited his sojourn,
He would not wait th' approach of morning?
Ray. Are they gone?
Grey. Amid the unguarded joy
Which held us, they escaped, unheeded.

Enter Second KNIGHT.

Knight. My lord,
Two strangers, it is said, in palmer's weeds
Attired, have lodged since morning in a hut;
Near to the forest of wild oaks, just where
The stream white rushes down the shelving cliff.
Ray. Since morning, say'st thou?
Knight. Further I have learn'd,
That [illegible], as doth appear from certain words
O'erheard, is borrow'd with design to mask
Some [illegible] purpose.
[illegible] it must be so:
[illegible]-concerted arts have foil'd our caution.

Ray. They scarce have measured half the precincts yet.
Send forth my knights, we will pursue them.

Enter KNIGHT.

Grey. No: one way there is, and only one ——but hence,
I hear the countess—She loves Lord Salisbury well;
And much, much will a pious mother
To save an only son. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

Another Apartment.

Enter LADY SALISBURY *and* ELEANOR.

Lady S. In spite of this event, this blest event,
That hath restored the lord of this fond bosom,
Yet is my mind with doubts and fears disturb'd;
Unaided thus, against whatever ill—
'Would he had waited the return of morn!

Eleanor. The night is dark indeed, the tempest high;
But hear me, lady—The hand
Of Heaven, that hitherto hath been his shield,
Will minister safe convoy to his steps,
Though night and darkness shed their thickest gloom.

Lady S. Misdeem not of my fears; or think I speak
As over diffident of that same Power
Thou nam'st;
But where's the bosom throbs not if it hope?
Hope ever is attended with a train
Of wakeful doubts; and where the sweet nymph harbours,

There flutters also her pale sister Fear—
But hence, as was our purpose, to the shrine;
Where, as is meet, for my dear lord restored
I will with grateful adoration——

Enter LORD WILLIAM.

Lord W. Mother, I fain would know that stranger, who
He is that just now met me.

Lady S. And wherefore would'st thou know him, love?

Lord W. Gentle he was, and mild; not like those grim-faced ones I see here every day: and such kind things he did, as made me love him dearly.

Lady S. Say, what were they?

Lord W. He kissed me, stroked my head, and patted me upon the cheek, and said——

Lady S. What said he, sweet?

Lord W. He said——Heaven bless thy beauteous head, sweet boy!

Enter GREY.

Grey. Permit me, honour'd dame; I have a word
Or two, that claims thine ear.

Lady S. Then but a word;
My present cares ill brook long interruption.

Grey. You may remember, when we last conferr'd,
The gracious purport of your words to what
Concern'd Lord Raymond, when you taught his suit
To hope a prosperous issue; thus by me he speaks;
In the recess of the hallow'd shrine,
Where with him stands the sable-vested priest,
He waits thy coming; there with pious vows
Exchanged even now, to consecrate thee his.
May every rose-lipp'd son of light look down,
And smile propitious on the joyful hour!

Lady S. Is this a season meet for such a theme?

Grey. For gracious acts, all seasons should be meet;
But say, that, for the present, he forebore
His earnest suit, say, shall to-morrow make
Him happy? or to-morrow's night, perchance?
Or—what shall be the bright succeeding day?
Lady S. I know not; nor will I submit me or
To promised league or tie; no, though thou should'st plead
Even with an angel's tongue.
Grey. You will not, lady!
Know then, this night, this hour must make thee his.
Lady S. This night! this hour! Who'll make me his, this hour?
Grey. A power, my lady, thou shalt learn to fear!
Force, force superior, that, with giant hand,
Plucks even the monarch from his throne; disrobes
The virgin of her honour; while Distress,
With streaming eyes, and loose, dishevell'd hair,
Holds forth her supplicating hands in vain.
Lady S. I know the monster thou would'st fright me with.
But I despise his power—Hast thou ne'er heard?
Learn, then, of me a truth, a golden truth,
Graved on the registers of hoary time:
Virtue, with her own native strength upheld,
Can brave the shock of ruffian force, unmoved
As is the rock, whose firm-set base not all
The tumult of the western surge can shake,
Though the fierce winds uplift him to the stars.
Grey. What will avail
Thy virtue's boasted powers, when thou shalt see
Torn from thy feeble arms all thou hold'st dear;
Yes, lady, thy Lord William—thy loved son?
Lady S. Ha! save him, Heaven! He dare not, sure—and yet——
Grey. Think, lady, think upon thy son.
Lady S. Protect

Him, O ye powers celestial! angels watch
His steps, and hover round his harmless head!
Grey. Say, will you to the altar, lady?
Lady S. Sooner to my grave.
Grey. Thy obstinacy on his head—Who waits?

Enter a RUFFIAN.

Lady S. What would'st thou here? Hence, execrable wretch!
Thou mak'st my blood run cold.
Lord W. Oh mother! I am frighten'd.
Lady S. Dearest lamb!
Hast thou no terrors for thyself?—Oh Salisbury!—
Hast thou no fears?—Oh! I could tell thee what,
Like thunder, would appal thy hearing, shrink
Up every nerve within thy blasted frame,
And make thee nothing.—Fear not, love.
Grey. Think not
With empty sounds to shake our purpose. Say,
Will you comply?
Lady S. My little innocent!
Thou dar'st not, fell as is thy nature.—My love!
My life!
Grey. Convey Lord William hence.
Lord W. Oh! save me, mother, save me!
Lady S. Forbear your impious hands! forbear!
Grey. Or to the altar, or by all therein
I swear, this moment wrests him from thy view.
Lady S. Inhuman that thou art! can nothing move
Thee?—Oh! those little harmless looks would preach
Even to the hungry lion, make him pause,
And turn his rage to pity.
Grey. Nay, madam——
Lady S. Forbear, and I will go—whither?
Distraction! I will rouse
The castle—help!—my cries shall tear the roofs.

Help! help! Oh, help!— the mother and the son!

Grey. Your cries are vain——

Enter LORD SALISBURY.

Lord S. Hold!—what is't ye do?

Grey. He here again!

Lord S. Speak, lady, would these men have wrong'd thee?

Pale fear is on thy cheek——

[ELEANOR *removes* LORD WILLIAM.—*Exeunt* GREY *and* RUFFIAN.

Lady S. Cold horror hath o'ercome me.

Lord S. Ever loved!

Sore thou wert sore distress'd; I heard thee cry.

Lady S. Ah, sore distress'd, indeed! the hand of peril

Was on me; violence and murder stared

Me full in all their hideous forms!

Lord S. Gracious powers! my fear, my fear, new waked,

For thee it was, as Heaven decreed, that urged

Me back, and brought me to thy timely rescue.

Lady S. 'Twas Heaven, indeed, that brought thee hither now!

Yet I have wond'rous fears: thou art but one,

Surrounded by a legion of those fiends.

Enter RAYMOND, GREY, *and armed* KNIGHTS.

Ray. [*As he enters.*] Where is the audacious man that hath presumed

To question with such bold intrusion?

Lord S. If him you mean

Who took the part of feeble innocence

Against the ruffian's arm—he's here.

Ray. Say, what dark purpose is't hath brought thee hither?

Confess thee true, or by the blessed saints

Thou shalt have cause to mourn the hour which moved
Thee, daring as thou art, t' approach our castle.
Lord S. To other regions, other climes, with threat
Like these, where proud oppression lords it: here
The free-born subject knows not what it is
To be in awe of arbitrary power.
Ray. I will know what thou art.
Lord S. Even what thou seest
Am I; a man, not prompt to offer wrong,
Yet of that frame I brook not to behold
A noble lady made the prey of ruffians.
Ray. Intruder, bold as thou art officious, wherefore
Should'st thou concern thee in this lady's cause!
Lord S. The cause of innocence should be the cause
Of all.—Confess thee, lord, was't nobly done,
To let those bold, those rude assailants loose,
And give a sanction to such foul proceedings?
Ray Pilgrim, hast thou forgot thee? Who am I?
Lord S. Who art thou! Ask, ask thy deeds,
And they will answer. The breath of fame hath told
How base they have been; they are gone abroad,
And the pure air is tainted with their foulness.
Ray. Presuming slave! whoe'er thou art, for thy
Unlicensed bearing dearly shalt thou answer.
Hence with the bold defamer! bind him fast!
Be instant death his lot, should he resist.—
Seize him, I say!
Lady S. Oh, spare him! spare——
Lord S. Out, servile ministers!
Ye know not who it is ye would attempt—
Oppressive lord! whom, nor the sacred bond
Of justice, nor of hospitality
Controls, regard me:—while with sight
More dire than e'er of Gorgon feign'd, I strike thee—
Now, Raymond, if thou hast of noble fire

One spark within thee, draw thy sword; come on,
And meet my arm; wake all that's man within thee.
Come on! [*Flings off his disguise.*
'Tis Salisbury!—Salisbury calls thee to the strife!
Ray. Salisbury! then what am I?
Lord S. Vengeance at length is arm'd! thy fate cries out,
And honour, injured honour, claims aloud
Her victim!
Ray. Secure thou seem'st of fate, but fall who will
A victim, let the sword—— [*Drawing.*
Grey. What would you do?
[*Aside, holding his arm.*
Look not to know him, all may yet be well.—
Be not abused, my lord: this is a plot,
Devised with purpose to effect thy ruin.
Lord S. Ha! what dost say?
Grey. Believe him not, my lord. He! he Lord Salisbury!
'Tis all a trick, an artful cheat, and he
A liar traced.
Lord S. Nay, then, my sword——
Dishonest knights!
[*Going to attack* RAYMOND, *he is disarmed.*
Lady S. Now, by these tears, do him no violence.
He is—is my husband!
Grey. Regard her not:
He hath conspired against thee, and demands
The hand of justice.
Lord S. Will ye not ope, ye heavens, and instant send
Your thunder to my aid?—Unhand me, villains!
Or, by the powers of vengeance, I will dash
You piece-meal.
Ray. Bear the traitor hence, and bind
His stubborn arms! Bestow the lady safe
Within her chamber.

Lady S. I will not part my husband!—Hold your hands!—
They overpower me!—Barbarous, barbarous men!
Lord S. Ruffians! forbear your more than impious hands!
Ray. Away!
Lord S. Slaves! murderers!
[*They are forced off severally.*
Ray. Away with him, away! Honour is lost,
And shame must henceforth be my only portion.
[*Exeunt.*

ACT THE FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The Castle.

Enter RAYMOND *and* GREY.

Grey. My lord, you waste the precious hours in cold
Irresolute delays: nor circumstance
Nor time admit of long deliberation.
Ray 'Would I had never seen this fatal mansion!
Grey. A sorry wish, my lord. Behold the fierce,
The lordly ranger of the desert wild;
No sluggish fear he knows; he pauses not,

Nor looks behind, but onward speeds him till
He gripes the trembling prey: be ever thus
The youth, whom thirst of love and beauty fires.
Ray. Away! call forth my train—nay, murmur not:
Command that, ere the lark proclaim the morn,
They hold them each prepared. Here I will rest,
If rest I can; this night; to-morrow's sun
Shall see me fled for ever from these walls.
Grey. Go—I detain thee not
Summon thy train—mount the swift steed—away!
The gates shall open to thy flight.—But know,
That shame and scorn shall follow at thy heels.
Yet worse; the insulted baron next pursues thee:
Nor rocks, nor mountains, nor opposing seas,
Shall stay him; but with more than mortal rage
He shall assail thee.
Ray. Are there no other means?
Grey. None.
Ray. No other way but murder! Horrid thought!
Oh, Grey! if e'er the dagger's drawn, I feel
Such perturbation here!—What then, oh what
Shall prove my portion when 'tis steep'd in blood?
The drops can from the point be wiped away,
But never from the mind.
Grey. Lift, lift thine eye,
And let it gaze upon the bright reward.
Riches and honours grace the swelling act;
While beauty, like the ruby-crowned morn,
When first she peers upon the mountain top,
Comes smiling on to meet you. These are objects,
My lord, would irritate the palsied arm
Itself of fear, excite the lagging blood,
And spur it on to acts of noble daring.
Ray. What would you do?—Think—Salisbury is a name
Of all beloved, of more than vulgar sway
Throughout the land; a deed, unauthorized

As this, shall never 'scape the arm of justice.
Grey. Such wary counsels shall our steps o'er-rule
As may deride suspicion.—One there is,
A knight among thy vassal train, perhaps
Unnoted: soft of speech he is, and fair;
But of a heart that mocks at human feelings:
Him I have sounded with reserve, and find
Him not unapt to this our secret purpose.—
But say, what recompense, what high reward
Awaits the man whose arm for thee enacts
Such signal service?
Ray. Half my fortunes, all
Would I on him bestow, whose prosperous arts
Should make the fair one mine.
Grey. She shall be thine.
Ray. But say, my friend, what tale, what rare device
Should fruitful art explore, that might amuse
Her just suspicions?
Grey. Innocence, the mask
Of innocence, and counterfeited sorrow——

Enter ELEANOR.

Eleanor. If beauty in distress, if dignity
Now sinking into ruin, can assail
Thy pity, come, oh come! and weep to see——
Grey. The countess, I suppose.
Eleanor. My lord, my lord,
'Twould melt the savage into human softness,
And make him hold forth pity to behold her!
Oh! did you see her, pale, disorder'd, as
She runs, now calling wildly on her lord,
Again upon her son, again on thee.
Sometimes, alas! she beats her beauteous bosom;
Anon, in frantic mood tears from her head
The silken hairs, which fall in heaps, unheeded;
Wrings her white hands, and weeps and raves by turns,
Till nature, spent and wearied, gives her pause.

Ray. Away—we will speak comfort to her sorrows.
[*Exit* ELEANOR.
Wretch that I am!—But I will yield them up;
Son, husband, all I will resign, if so
I may appease her phrensy.
[*Going, is detained by* GREY.

Grey. Be not rash.
Short is the date of every stronger passion;
Unstay'd the mind of woman; by a breath
Oft agitated, by a breath composed.
Yield them, my lord! it would be madness, ruin!

Ray. Whichever way I turn, it is destruction.

Grey. O'ercast with fear, thine eye takes nothing in
But fancies of the sickliest hue.—For shame!
Rouse, rouse, my noble lord! awake, shake off
This weakness. Pleasure must be woo'd with toil.
Go to her, solace her; if that should fail,
Permit her, as by stealth, to visit Salisbury;
At sight of him this tumult shall subside.

Ray. With love and pity I am torn. In vain
I strive; too far I am advanced in error.
Oh! will no hand disclose a path whereby
I may return?—Accursed be thou, myself!
And doubly be accursed the fatal hour
I turn'd mine ear to thy destructive counsels!
[*Exit*

Grey. My hope begins to totter.
If he resign them, Salisbury is appeased,
And he retires: what then becomes of Grey
On me—on me of course the tempest falls.
That must not be.—I will, before he goes
To her, explore each access to his heart;
Attack each avenue that leads to virtue;
Try every mining art that may assist
The loose contagion: Should he seize her beauties,
Farewell remorse; then dies the injured husband.
[*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Prison in a Castle.—LORD SALISBURY *discovered on the Ground, in Chains.*

Enter LEROCHES.

Ler. Alas! on the cold ground! I fear his wrongs
Have made him mad; I heard him rage. My lord,
Rise, rise, my lord, and speak to thy Leroches.
Lord S. Thou art unkind.
Ler. Oh! 'would to Heaven that I could ease thy troubles!
Lord S. I had in sweet oblivion lost myself,
And every care; why hast thou called me back
To hated recollection?—O, my wrongs!
My wrongs! they now come rushing o'er my head—
Again, again they wake me into madness!
Ler. Thy wrongs shall be revenged.
Lord S. Torn from them both!
Let me not think.
Ler. Think on our friends, my lord:
Perhaps, even now, they are at hand; and soon
Will thunder at the gates.
Lord S. Is't possible?
Or do my eyes but false persuade me to it?—
In trammels! and within my walls!—beneath
That roof where I am sole-invested lord!
Ler. Look, behold.
Lord S. I see thou art dishonour'd.
Ler 'Tis the will
Of Heaven, and I submit me to my fortunes.
Lord S. How cam'st thou hither?
Ler. By command, as I
Suppose, of——but I will not name him.

Lord S. Blasts
Upon him!—Didst thou see my wife?
Ler. No, my lord.
Lord S. Nor my son?
Ler. My lord, I saw not either.
Lord S. Nor of either heard?
Ler. No, my good lord;—I trust that they are safe.
Lord S. Hear me, sweet Heaven! ye throned powers above,
Dread arbiters of mortal doings! hear—
Dry not instant up the springs of life,
But grant me measure of revenge! Unbind,
For pity, these dishonour'd limbs, unbind,
And give this monster to my willing arm!
If I not firmly gripe—If I not tear,
With more than savage force, his hated form——

Enter MORTON.

Traitor!—
What hast thou done? Bring forth my honour'd dame—
Haste, bring her instant!—give her to my arms,
Uninjured, undefiled! or, by the souls
Of the most holy and unspotted saints, I'll——Alas! now,
Spare me, good Heaven!—I am, I am to blame.
Imports thy coming aught with me?
Mor. Behold
In me thy better angel, come to warn
Thee of unguarded danger.—Oh, my lord!
My lord! beware of horrid treachery!
Whatever knight thou not'st, that, traitor-like,
Approacheth thee with smiles; that with the charm
Of honey'd speech would practise on thy hearing,
Of him beware; they seek thy ruin; chance
Betray'd their purpose: I was touch'd with pity.
[*Going.*

Lord S. Nay, go not yet.
Mor. Suspicion's on the watch;
My thoughts are scarce my own.
Lord S. It is for guilt,
Not conscious honesty, to taste of fe:
Mor. Know, then, my lord, though strict necessity
Enrolls me in the list of Raymond's train,
Yet doth my soul abhor the unhallow'd service.
Lord S. Be thou but faithful, and discover all
Thou know'st, so shalt thou thrive in Salisbury's favour.
Mor. Fear not my faith. But shall Lord Salisbury prove
A friend indeed? For I shall need thy arm
And interest both against so great a foe.
Lord S. Now by my honour, ever yet held dear,
I will protect thee 'gainst whatever foe.
Mor. Morton desires but this.—Know then, that late,
As by the western porch I stood, my ear
Was met by certain voices; I turn'd, and straight
Was known that same insidious knight and Grey,
In low, but earnest converse. Thee they named:
And I could hear the latter, whilst he said,
"A dagger is the best. With honest smiles,
"And fair-instructed speech, you must essay him.—
"Thy peace and fortunes on this feat depend."
Lord S. I thank thee for this warning; and ere long
Shall recompense thy love.
Mor. Had I the power
To serve thee as the will, thou should'st not wear
Those marks of shame.——But oh! the unhappy countess!
Lord S. What, what of her?
Mor. Alas! to think the pangs
She feels this moment, torn as she hath been
By rude barbarians from her lord and son.

Lord S. But is she safe? Hath not dishonour
reach'd her?
Mor. Oh, may she never know dishonour!—Yet
Lord Raymond——
Lord S. Perish the detested name
For ever! for it makes my blood outcourse
The wholesome speed of nature.
Mor. It is true,
He holds her in his power.
Lord S. He does, he does:
And I do live to know it.
Mor. But I trust
He will not use that power.—Farewell, my lord;
I will away, and gather all I can
Of their condition.
Lord S. Thou shalt win my love.
See, see my wife! oh, see her, if thou canst!
Speak comfort to her. Say, the only pangs I feel
Are for her safety. Bid her hope for timely aid;
But to remember still, the virtuous mind
Will welcome death itself before dishonour.
Mor. To see her is a task I fear will foil
My utmost; but no art shall be untried.
[*Exit* MORTON.
Lord S. Is there no way to freedom?—Oh my
friends!
My friends! Haste, Ardolf, haste to my revenge.
Ler. Thy fierce impatience, thy untoward will
It is, my lord, that hath betray'd our safeties.
To Ardolf deaf, thou would'st not wait his succours;
Deaf too, to me, thou would'st approach the castle.
Lord S. Fear not: this stranger, like Heaven's
brighter star,
Hath risen propitious.—Heavens! but what of that?
My wife!—perhaps even now within the gripe
Of foul incontinence she struggles.—Beware,
That thought—down, down, or I shall rage to mad-
ness.

Ler. My lord, he would n
Lord S. Hark!
Lady S. [*From without.*] Hold off your brutal hands!
Lord S. 'Tis she! 'tis she!
The slave assails her. Instant let me forth,
Or I——
Lady S. Hast thou no touch of pity?
Lord S. Horror! horror!
Out, hair! out by the roots! nor let a grain
Be left to tell there grew such honours here.
Lady S. O my lord! my lord!
Lord S. By Heaven, I will not be restrain'd!
[LEROCHES *strives to stay him.*
Not all the powers
Of hell united shall withhold me from her!
Ler. Preserve him, Heaven! I fear
Some act of horrid import.—Oh! she comes!
Wild, wild as the rough ocean vex'd with storms.
[*Bursts forth.*

Enter LADY SALISBURY, ELEANOR, *and* MORTON.

Lady S. I will have vengeance. Such an outrage —No,
I will not weep. They think I have no means:
'Tis false! I will resume a spirit.
Eleanor. Alas! alas!
Lady S. I had a son; sweet William! thou hast heard
Him prattle: there was music on his tongue.
Eleanor. Can Heav'n behold such crimes, and not awake
Its thunders?
Lady S. Weep'st thou? I can weep myself;
I have some cause.—Who
Will part us?—The rains beat sore,
And the winds make a noise—'tis a rough night

No little star to guide his darkling steps—
The heavens do rain down pity for me.
Eleanor. Rave.
Not thus, dear lady; oh, be comforted!
Lady S. Yes, yes, I know; these trifles have disturb'd me.
The bird is rifled.
Poor flutterer! it was naught to spoil
Her of her little hope.—Didst thou not see
Her valiant mate, how fierce he shook his plumes,
And peck'd at them? Did he not?—He had saved
His mistress from the spoilers, but they snared him.

Enter LORD SALISBURY.

Where is the slave? I will not brook delay.
Lady S. He's come! he's come!—Now, ruffians, I have found
Him; we will die together, ere you part us.
Lord S. Alas, she raves!
Lady S. Say you!—Put Raymond to the torture!
Lord S. I will tear him joint by joint.
Lady S. But they will part us.—See, see, they come!
Oh save me from them!—Now, now they pull
My lord—you shall not—no, no power on earth
Shall force me—again they drag me—now,
My lord, now, now, now—Oh— [*Faints.*
Lord S. My wife! my Ela!
Lost as thou art, oh! do not leave me!
Eleanor. Nature, my lord, unequal to the conflict,
Has for a space retired within herself,
But shortly to return. This interval
Of death-like quiet will, I trust, recall
Her safer senses.
Lady S. But this is strange! Am I indeed awake?

Where have I been? Where am I?
Eleanor. Madam, with your friends.
Speak to her, my lord; sooth her, and she'll be calm.
Lord S. Speak to her, sooth her—
Oh agonizing hour! Had I but perish'd
In the same wave that buried my loved friends,
It had been well.—'Twas cruelty to save me.
Lady S. Even so—let me stand up—soft, soft, I'm weary—
What is the matter?
Lord S. Hold, hold, my heart!
Lady S. Nay, but inform me; I am over doubtful;
I would believe, I know—if what I now
Behold be not a dream, you are my husband.
Lord S. The wretch that was so call'd.
Lady S. My lord!
My life! why dost thou start from me?—Oh take
Me to thy arms, for I have need of comfort!
Lord S. Art thou not undone?
Lady S. Indeed I have wept.
Lord S. Lost, stain'd, dishonour'd by a villain?
Lady S. What means my love?
Think'st thou that I have other wrong
To weep, than thou hast seen?
Lord S. I heard thee cry.
Lady S. Dishonour'd!—O!
The thought wakes every pulse to indignation!
Lord S. Then thou art safe—thy honour unassay'd?
Lady S. So witness Heaven!
Lord S. The God of heaven be praised!
Lady S. And could'st thou think so meanly of me? Oh!
I had let the life-blood from this bosom forth
Ere I had brook'd dishonour.
Lord S. Best of thy sex! Thy cries like daggers pierced me;

And fearful fancy pictured such a scene,
As hurried me to madness—But thou art safe—
My wife is safe!—and I am blest again.
Lady S. My heart o'erjoys—Then wherefore do I fear?
Lord S. I had forgot—our son; for him thou fear'st.
Lady S. Not only for my son, but for thyself,
Thy precious self, I tremble—O this fiend!
The slaves and agents of destruction, black
And bold, are station'd round him, and but wait
Their master's nod.
Ler. 'Would we were safe bestow'd
Without this fearful prison!
Lady S. 'Would we were!—
Think—think, my lord, is there no way to flight?
Lord S. Thou hast recall'd to my remembrance, what,
If seconded by this our plighted friend,
May claim a serious and attentive hearing.
Mor. Small is the service I can boast, my lord;
In all my best, I shall be prompt to aid you.
Lord S. Hear then—Deep, underneath this vaulted ground,
Curious, and close, by our forefathers scoop'd,
I do remember me, there is a dark
And secret mine, which leads by many a maze,
Without the castle. Not far thence, there stands,
Within the bosom of an aged grove,
An house, for pious uses set apart,
The hallow'd seat of godly brethren: there
I fear not we shall rest secure of ill.
Lady S. Most opportune as could our wishes frame—
But oh! our little hope! our younger care!
Mor. My life shall answer for Lord William's safety.

Lady S. Then let us forth.
Mor. The night is over young;
The castle's yet awake, and would but mock
The attempt.
Lord S. Say, what shall be the appointed hour?
Mor. Some three hours hence, my lord; or ere the clock
Perchance have told the second watch—And now,
That squint suspicion mar not, let us part.
Lord S. Farewell, my love!—Meantime,
Leroches, we will rest us here apart—Farewell,
Farewell! thou soother sweet of every care!
The God, that loves the unsullied mind, descend,
And be thy guardian till we meet again.
[*Exeunt omnes.*

ACT THE FIFTH.

SCENE I.

An Apartment in the Castle.

Enter GREY *and* MORTON.

Grey. My trusty Morton! well hast thou repaid
The nicer hope which I reposed in thee.
Their unprovided rest outruns my wishes.

Mar. Fools! not to see through my hypocrisy;
That, in the borrow'd guise of honest friendship,
I studied but to lure them to my toils—
Conceal'd from upper light, it yields a safe
Retreat; through that they purposed their escape.

Grey. Within the secret womb of that same vault,
When all the castle's hush'd, their bleeding trunks
We will deposit.

Mor. Yes—we will be bloody.

Grey. Here is the weapon—Be firm, and prosper.
[MORTON *receives a dagger, and goes out.*
——Thou too, unthinking fool, must this hour bleed—
'Would it were over—they may chance to wake—
Thou, sleep! still child of sable-hooded night,
Befriend us. From the dark Lethean cell
Upconjure all thy store of drowsy charms;
Lock fast their lids, o'erpower each torpid sense,
That they awake not ere the deed be done—
Bell tolls.
The second watch; and, like death's curfew, deep
And dismal, verberates the solemn knell.

Enter a KNIGHT.

Knight. A stranger, sir, who calls him Oswald, waits
Without the castle, and would speak with you.

Grey. Oswald! He is our friend.

Knight. I have not learnt
His errand; but, as it would seem, he comes
With news that much imports thy present hearing.

Grey. I'll speak with him anon.

Knight. I know not what
Their purpose, but even now, as on the tower
I stood which high o'erlooks the eastern causeway
Methought I heard the distant sound of horse,
As hither bent in full career.

Grey. The sound
Of horse!—Look out; call up our knights; away.
[*Exit* KNIGHT.
What can delay him?—Should my present hopes
Miscarry, I will bear the lady hence,
And make her hostage for my safety—
He comes!—

Enter MORTON.

Mor. Oh! that the earth would yawn and cover me!
Or that Heaven's quick-devouring fires had shrunk
And wither'd up this arm when it was raised—
Eyes! eyes! why closed you not ere you beheld
The ghastly ruin?
Grey. Speak direct; are they disposed?
Mor. Away—thou hast destroyed my peace for ever—
Had you beheld him as he lay, struggling
In the cold gripe of death; his cheek o'erspread
With livid pale; those eyes, that late shot forth
So radiant, now quite sunk; their burning lamps
Extinct; while from the deep-mouth'd wound,
As from a copious fountain, issued forth
Life's purple springs—
I would have fled, but horror for a space
Suspended every power.
Grey. 'Tis well—
Hast thou then slain Lord Salisbury?
At thy own peril be it—Help! he has slain
The innocent!
They're murder'd, foully murder'd by a slave! [*Exit.*
Mor. The earth has teem'd with prodigies—this sure
Outmonsters all.

Enter RAYMOND, *hastily, with a Sword in his Hand.*

Ray. On what purpose art thou here?
Mor. Lord Raymond cannot be a stranger sure.
Ray. A dagger!—what hast thou done?
Mor. Did not my lord approve the deed?
Ray. What deed?
Mor. How's this?—My lord,
I had your sanction, ratified by Grey,
With promise of high recompense the hour
When Salisbury should expire.
Ray. Accursed be he that told thee so, and thou
That gav'st him credit!
Mor. This is strange!
Ray. Approve!
I did not; by the powers of truth, I did not—
Remorseless villain!—Where, where shall I hide
Me? whither shall I fly?—Oh, deed of horror!—
Thy blood, detested hireling, shall in part
Compensate.
Mor. Hold—He cannot sure dissemble—
Wish you, my lord, this deed were yet undone?
Ray. What would the monster?—Oh! could I re-
call
His life, by killing twenty thousand slaves
Like thee, it were a comfort.
Mor. I believe
That you are innocent; know then, my lord—
He lives—he sleeps; and sleeps secure of harm.
Ray. Take heed thou dost not trifle.
Mor. I will confess
Me true, and Heav'n forgive my foul intent!
I undertook to slay this innocent;
Approach'd him as a friend—I saw his sufferings;
Saw his distracted wife: at length I cursed,
And in my heart abjured the wicked purpose.
Ray. Hadst thou the goodness! Then, perhaps—

Mor. I thought,
Haply, that you yourself might soon relent.
This instrument of purposed cruelty,
I took; and, with a fair-devised tale
Of Salisbury's death, amused the guilty wretch
That would ensnare your quiet.
Ray. Is this honest?
Mor. Approach, my lord, approach, and let your eye
Be witness of my truth—In doing thus,
I thought I should be deem'd Lord Raymond's friend.
Ray. Thou wert the best of friends!—Retire thou now. [*Exit* MORTON.
One way there yet remains to reconcile
This double war, and heal my tortured bosom—
Thou, that so soundly sleep'st, unguarded thus. [*Going towards the side scene.*
Against whatever ill that may approach thee,
Awake! rouse from the bed of listless sleep,
And see who comes to greet thee.

Enter LORD SALISBURY.

Lord S. Do I dream?
Or am I in the regions of the unbless'd,
Beset with monsters?—Though thou art a fiend,
I will attempt thee.
Ray. Rush not on my weapon.
I have sought thee on a cause which honour loves,
And would not have thee mar my soul's fair purpose.
Lord S. Inglorious! base! O shame to manhood Dearly
Shalt thou atone the accumulated wrongs
That I do bleed withal.
Ray. Think not that I shall fly thee; or that I
Have sought thee now, but on such terms as even

May challenge thy applause. I come a foe
Indeed, but I do come a generous foe.
Lord S. A generous foe!—The brave, indeed, aspire
To generous acts; their every thought looks up,
And honour's dictates are their only function:
But thou!—what terms would'st thou propose? What act
Of that essential virtue, that may raze
The ignoble stains wherewith thou art polluted?
Ray. The ignoble, and the brave, alike have err'd;
And he, that reascends to virtue's height,
Does often snatch a wreath, which never bloom'd
On safer wisdom's brow—First let me loose
Those ignominious bonds, which have indeed
My own dishonour'd, not the wearer's arm.
[*Takes off his chains.*
Lord S. Say, to what purpose tends this honest seeming?
Ray. That I have wrong'd thee, I confess—take this, [*Gives him a sword, and draws another.*
The only restitution I have left.
I know thou never canst forgive, nor I
Forget; the sword then judge between.
Lord S. Indeed!
Lives there so much of honour then within thee?
Spite of the mighty wrongs which thou hast done
Me, I do thank thee.
Ray. Now Fortune mark her favourite!—
[*Loses his sword in the encounter.*
Then she is partial, and I must submit.
Lord S. Take up thy sword again; my fair revenge
Disdains too cheap a conquest.
Ray. 'Tis too much.
Oh generous! generous even to cruelty!—
Some way I would repay thee—Oh! that I
[*Takes up his sword.*
Had never seen thy wife!—It may not be—

Then let me tear for ever from my breast
The guilty passion: thus I thank thee—thus
[*Wounds himself.*
Atone the mischiefs, that—oh— [*Falls.*
Lord S. This indeed
Atones for all. Thou much-misguided youth!
What tempted thee to stray so wide from honour?
Ray. Ask, ask that villain; he will answer all—
That villain Grey! whose wicked arts seduced me—
Forgive——I die, I die; a dreadful proof
What ills await the wretch, who gives his ear
To vicious counsels.
Lord S. Dreadful proof indeed!—
I do forgive thee—so forgive thee Heaven!

Enter MORTON.

Now, where's my wife? where is my friend Leroches?
Mor. My lord, by my assistance he has fled.
I saw how vain your purpose to escape;
His single flight was unobserved—your friends,
In quest of whom he hasted, are arrived.
[*A trumpet is heard.*
Lord S. 'Tis well.
But where's my wife? my son? my soul is maim'd
Of half its joys till I've again embraced them.
Lady S. [*Without.*] Where, where is my hero?
Lord S. Hark! 'tis she—she comes!

Enter LADY SALISBURY *and* LORD WILLIAM, *conducted by* LEROCHES.

My wife is in my arms again!—
Oh! whence this precious, this unlook'd event?
Lady S When the fell ruffian,
When Gr y, with impious hands, had snatch'd us hence,
Then came my guardian angel, came your friend,
And rescued us from ruin.
Happy hour!

I took the path which brought me to their rescue!
The atrocious villain fell beneath this arm.
Lord S. They're here! they're here! my wife and son are here!—
Proclaim it, O ye sons of light!
Throughout th'unmeasured tracts
Of highest Heaven, that virtue is made happy.
Lady S. Let the sun cease to shine, the planets cease,
Drop every star from his ethereal height,
Ere I forget thee, source of every good!
Lord S. Friends, I am much beholden to you all.
My love! the gloom, that overspread our morn,
Is now dispersed; our late mishaps shall be
The story of our future evening, oft
Rehearsed. Our son too—he shall hang upon
The sounds, and lift his little hands in praise
To Heav'n; taught by his mother's bright example,
That, to be truly good, is to be bless'd. [Exeunt.

THE END.

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